My Wonderful Visit

Elizabeth Hill

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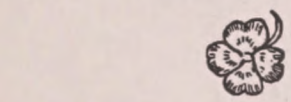
MY WONDERFUL VISIT

Lucy

MY WONDERFUL VISIT

BY

ELIZABETH GILL



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CHAPTER I

IN WHICH I GO AND GET THERE

WHEN I was a little girl, eight years old, I made an enchanting, never-to-be-forgotten visit. It was a visit to Cousin Sally's farm, and it lasted only a week, but it was full of wonders and doings and happenings.

I knew that it would be, even before I went, for I had never been into the country, the real, Simon-pure country, although I had often taken long walks with my grandfather to the fields and woods outside the town, and the Country was in my fancy second only to Fairyland.

My mother asked Mr. Crowe, the milkman, who brought us milk twice a week, and whose way led by Cousin Sally's place, to carry me out there; and one warm July morning she got me ready to go. I felt excited and delighted; my

heart went hop-skip, and my mind was in such a stir—as if my wits were feathers, dancing every which way—that all the morning I hardly knew what I or anybody else was about. But I kept quiet; I was what is called "a quiet child."

When Mr. Crowe came I kissed everyone, and went and climbed into the wagon; but I had to wait there a long time, while Mr. Crowe told my grandmother what the news was out his way and talked politics with my grandfather.

In the meantime, my mother brought a valise to put under the wagon seat. The lock of it was broken, and she had tied it together at the handles with an old shoestring; it was not quite shut, and my pink-and-white dress was showing.

"Be sure that you shake out your dresses as soon as you get there; the bag is so full that they will be all wrinkles if you don't," she said. "And ask Cousin Sally to let me know if she decides to keep you over a week, for, if you stay, I must send some more clothes. Now, be a good girl, and mind Aunt Eunice and Cousin Sally."

I said, "Yes'm," and reached down to kiss her again.

Then my grandmother came to the woodshed door, and told my mother that I ought to have a

sunshade. "She'll get sunstruck, in this broiling heat," she said.

"She couldn't hold it," my mother returned. "She will have to use both hands to hold on with whenever the wagon jolts. I guess she will do well enough; her hat-brim is broad, and she is used to being in the sun."

Just then, Cap'n Weeks, who sat reading the newspaper at his front window on the opposite side of the street, put his head out and asked: "Why, where's Lucy going to?" and he was so hard of hearing, that when I answered: "Out to Kittie Reed's, to make a visit," he did not understand. "How?" said he, shielding his ear with his hand.

"Out to Eunice's," my grandmother told him, as loud as she could call; but he did not understand her either.

"How?" he said again.

Then, my grandfather, who was coming through the woodshed with Mr. Crowe, lifted a hurricane voice:

"She's going out to Eunice's to make a visit. Out to Sally Reed's place, to make a visit. Out—to—Sally—Reed's!"

"Oh—oh!" said Cap'n Weeks, nodding satisfaction. "Wal, be a good little gal, Lucy."

All the children that happened to be playing near gathered around to see me off. They stood on the edge of the sidewalk, and looked and looked and looked with wide, serious eyes, but did not say anything. I don't know whether the difference was in their feelings or mine, but, although they were my playmates, all at once it seemed as if they were strangers; their curious, sober, speechless staring made me shy. I tried to smile and be at ease, but I wished that Mr. Crowe would stop talking politics and get ready to go.

By and by he did; and then suddenly a big lump came in my throat, and I felt as if I wanted to get right out of the wagon and stay at home with mother and grandma and grandpa and little Bob. But I sat still and tried to smile again as I bade a last good-by.

Grandpa came and kissed me and put a roll of sassafras lozenges into my hand. "Have a good time," he said, "and be a good girl."

"Yes, you be a good girl," grandma called.

"G'lang," said Mr. Crowe to the horse, and the horse walked leisurely away.

The Middle Street Guards, a regiment of youngsters, to which Bobby belonged, were just marching out of the Bibber boys' yard, and they

fell in behind us, drumming and tooting. Bobby was one of the tooters. They had little tin horns that did not give very much sound, and their drum was a very small one, but they managed to make considerable noise (you know what boys are), and they kicked up a great dust as they tramped. All the children on the sidewalk kept apace with them.

Before the horse had taken a dozen steps, Liddy Ellen Tucker came along. Liddy Ellen was an old lady, of about my grandmother's age, who lived next door to us. She was a special friend of mine and knew where I was going. She was coming home from market, and had a basket on her arm.

"Hello, Lucy, you off?" she cried, cheerily. "I hope you'll have a real nice time. Remember me to Aunt Eunice. And be a good girl, Lucy."

"Yes'm," I replied. And then I was hailed from the other side of the street by Celia Tate. Celia was a young lady, another particular friend of mine. She was sweeping the sidewalk in front of her home. She wore a pink sweeping-cap above her pretty face.

"O Lucy, what a warm day for a ride!" she cried. "Hope you'll have a lovely time, and

drink lots of milk, and get real fat. Good-by! Be a good girl, Lucy! Ta, ta!" And she gayly waved her hand.

Then we came to the corner, and the Middle Street Guards marched up India Street. As they went they gave three cheers, a toot, and a roll of the drum, and every one of them shouted: "Good-by! Be a good girl, Lucy!" I could hear Bobby's loud and lisping voice above the others, and although I felt provoked and embarrassed, I waved my hand to him; but when all those children who had stared at me in that dumb yet spellful way found their tongues and screamed after me, "Good-by! Be a good girl, Lucy!" my temper shot up in a blaze, and I turned my back.

"G'lang," said Mr. Crowe to the horse. Then he looked gravely down at me. "I expect you're a pretty hard character," said he, with a slow shake of the head.

He looked so serious that I did not know he was joking. It gave me a sinking feeling in the breast.

"They just say that. They don't mean that they think I'll be naughty," I said with solemn earnestness; but Mr. Crowe's only response was another doubting head-shake. He chirruped to

the horse, and away we went, with a rattle of tin cans behind us.

It was not pleasant to be riding with a person who had such a bad opinion of me, but there were so many interesting things to look at that I forgot to be unhappy. At first I did not mind the heat at all, for after we went from under the arching elm trees on Middle Street we drove along behind a sprinkling-cart with its refreshing squirt of water, which, by simply closing my eyes to a mere crack that shut out everything else, I could fancy into a fountain; and when we turned down Market Street we found ourselves behind a dripping ice-cart, piled high with great, glittering blocks, that made a miniature iceberg. Then we came to the Market, where Mr. Crowe had an errand to do.

"You set here, Sissy. I sha'n't be gone long," he said; but he was gone long, a long, long time. It seemed hours to me, sitting there in the hot sunshine, and I grew very tired; for the wagon seat was high, hard, and slippery, there was no back to it for me to lean against, and I was so little that my feet did not reach the floor.

I enjoyed the novelty of looking down on the rows of meat and vegetables, for always before I had had to look up from the sidewalk to see

them ; and it was enlivening to watch the people and the teams moving about. I counted the various kinds of vegetables—beans, peas, lettuce, cucumbers, potatoes, onions, and all the rest ; then I counted the horses, the white ones and the dark ones, those that were moving and those that were standing still ; then I chose what I would have for dinner if I were going to have a great dinner, say a Fourth of July one, with a lot of company to dine ; then I looked at the faces of the people and considered which of them I would choose to know, supposing that I had to know some of them ; and then I thought about my visit, and wondered and dreamed. I wondered if Kitty, Rosalie, and I would do any of the things that the children in the Rollo and Lucy books did. I hoped there would be a brook with stepping-stones, mossy under the water and smooth above. We would go over them in our bare feet, and dip our toes in the cool water. And the woods would be cool and dim, and—just then Mr. Crowe came back.

" You all tuckered out, Sissy ? " he said, as he climbed in and gave the reins a shake. " I stayed longer than I meant to ; I got interested talking with a man over there, that thinks different from what I do. We'll go right along now."

"How far is it out to Cousin Sally's?" I asked.

"Seven mile," Mr. Crowe answered; and that was the last time either of us spoke until we came to the end of my journey.

As we went through the city I looked at the store windows, at people and teams, at the flower gardens and the trees; and sometimes I wanted to tell Mr. Crowe that such or such a person lived in this or that house, but he looked as if he had forgotten all about me, so I did not like to. When we came to Deering bridge the tide was in, and some boys were fishing from a punt down below. I wanted to ask Mr. Crowe what kind of fish they were catching, but I did not. Then I looked over into Deering's Oaks, and remembered that Grandpa and I went there nutting last fall, and I came near telling Mr. Crowe what a famous place it was for acorns; but I did not. I was not sure that he would care about it. Besides, I knew that he believed me to be a very bad girl; I thought perhaps that was the reason he would not talk to me, and it took away my courage.

We drove through Deering and out into the country. It was an endless panorama of fields and straggling farm-houses, with woods for a background. In many of the fields men were at work raking and loading hay, and we passed several

piled-up hay-racks on the road. The air was quivery with heat, and full of butterflies, yellow, brown, and white, dizzily hovering and fluttering. There were no clouds in the sky. The dust rose under our wheels. The milk-cans jingle-jangled all the time. And oh, how the grasshoppers shrilled! I thought that noise was their voices, and said to myself, "I guess they'll have sore throats by night;" and the idea so tickled me that I laughed out loud. Then I gave a shy, sidelong glance at Mr. Crowe, and found him looking in pretty much the same way at me; then we both quickly looked away; and so we rode on in silence.

By and by we came to another bridge, over a beautiful river, where the trees on the banks leaned to the clear water till they could see themselves. It was the river at Riverton, and although in those days there was no park there, the river was the same as now. I had never seen a river before, and I so far forgot my awe of Mr. Crowe as to twist about on the seat and seize his coat-sleeve to steady myself while I gazed down at the green and sky-blue reflections. He helped me with one hand, but neither of us spoke.

We passed a school-house, more houses, fields, and orchards, and then entered a woodland road. I had never seen a road like that before—with

woods on both sides of it. It was like the roads that you read about in fairy tales, leading through enchanted forests to enchanted castles. Tall evergreens stood there, and other kinds of trees, too, the kind that look green only in spring and summer—"summer-greens" I used to call them. There were trees, trees, reaching ahead as far as you could see. On either side you could see under them, away into the mysteriousness of the wood. Along the edge grew brambles, weeds, and ferns. Shadows danced on the white, sandy road.

There was a long stretch of this wonderful road; and through it all I forgot that I was tired and warm, but kept looking, first on one side, then on the other, then ahead to where the trees seemed to meet, then up to the lofty tree-tops, then down to the white road with its wheel-ruts and ribbon-lines of grass.

All at once the wood on the left ended, and there was a pasture with a stone wall bounding it; and beyond the pasture was a large vegetable garden; and beyond the garden was a house, a white house, with a piazza and green blinds, and with a barn beside it.

Then Mr. Crowe broke silence.

"Do you know who lives there?" he asked, with a sort of smile.

"No, sir," I answered, faintly.

"That's the place," he assured me.

"I don't see anybody," I said, feeling suddenly disheartened. I had not really thought about it, but unconsciously I had half expected to see all the family at the door to welcome me. At least, I had looked to see Kitty and Rosalie.

"They know you're coming; I guess they'll see you in a minute," he replied.

We drove up to the big gate. There were two gates, side by side, a little one for people and a big one for teams, and the big one was open. A tall pine-tree stood by the entrance, and threw its shadow across the road. It was now early in the afternoon.

Mr. Crowe stopped in the shadow, stepped down, lifted me out, and put my valise beside me. I was so tired that for a minute I could hardly stand, and when a great dog, who was lying on the piazza, rose and gazed at me I was frightened too. But I did not tell Mr. Crowe how I felt, and I did not try to lift my valise while he could see me. I stood still at the gate, waiting for him to drive away.

"Good-by," I said.

"Good-by," said Mr. Crowe.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH I AM "PERSONALLY CONDUCTED"

I WATCHED him out of sight. It seemed queer to me that a minute ago I had been sitting in that wagon, riding along, and wondering when I should get—here, where I was now. And then it seemed strange that I was here, *here*, standing alone at a gate, far away from home and all my folks. I cannot tell you how *strange* I felt, as if I were not quite real, but a person in a story, having things happen to me and not knowing what the story would have me do next. I cannot tell you, either, how lonesome and timid I felt, and how little, how very, very little. You see, I had never been away from home before—at least, not alone. Just imagine how you would feel to be far away from your mother, standing alone in a road, with no one in sight but a dog that looked as big as an ox.

The big dog did not bark, but stood on the piazza and gazed at me, like the monstrous beasts

that guard the enchanted castles. I was afraid of him. I stood still, considering what to do. It came to me, that, in fairy tales, if you do not show your fear, but walk straight by the terrible beasts and dragons, they do not harm you, and the enchanted castle doors spring open to let you in. I was not a brave little girl, but because there did not seem to be anything else for me to do, I resolved to try to do it. So I lifted my valise, which was heavy for me, and staggered along. Then the big dog gave one deep-toned bark, and I stopped, trembling. Then another, smaller dog's voice took up the challenge, and the next minute Rosalie came running out of the door and down the piazza steps, and at her heels ran Prince, her black-and-tan, while the big fellow slowly followed.

Rosalie came so fast that her long brown curls blew out behind her. She was very glad to see me; she flung her arms around my neck and kissed me. Then she laid hold of my valise. "I'll take it," she said; "let me have it."

"No, no," I returned; "it's too heavy." But Rosalie, although two years younger than I, and shorter, was sturdier; besides, she was not tired. So she tugged the bag along with very little help from me.

Prince began to caper about me and leap up against my shoulder, wagging his tail and barking joyously. He recognized me as an old acquaintance, for he had sometimes been to town with Cousin Sally. The big dog walked up and smelled of me. I was afraid, but I tried not to show it. I put my hand out to pat his head, but when his cold nose touched it I thought that he was going to bite, and drew it back with a shudder.

"He won't hurt you," said Rosalie. "Rover's a good dog. Aren't you, Rover? He's only trying to get acquainted."

Rover walked ahead in a dignified way, as if to say: "I won't trouble you. You are very foolish to be afraid of me." He was a hound, black with a tan breast. He was sleek, and his long ears were silky soft. There was a large sore place on his back, half healed, and livid-looking.

"What made his back like that?" I asked.

"He was scalded. A dreadful wicked woman did it on purpose, because he went to her house, and she doesn't like dogs. Mother put things on it, to take the burn out. He isn't our dog, but he stays with us all the time now. Lucy, we didn't think you'd get here so soon. Kitty and I were going to run down to the gate when we heard the wagon, but we didn't hear it.

"Kitty! Kitty!" she called. "Here's Lucy!"

Then she added: "Kitty's tooth aches. That's why she didn't go to school. Down, Prince, down! You've kissed Lucy enough."

We went by the front door, to the piazza, which led to the back one. On it were a lot of house plants, taking their summer outing. The yard was full of cunning little downy chickens, running, pecking, and peep-peeping; while several mother hens confined in tent-like coops thrust their heads between the slats and called: "Cluck, cluck, cluck!" to their straying babies. The barn-door was open, and I saw a swing hanging there.

Kitty came to the door just as we reached it. She had a handkerchief tied about her face, tooth-ache fashion. Her eyes were red, as if she had been crying. She kissed me and took the valise. Then we went, all of us excepting Rover, into the kitchen, where more kisses awaited me, from Aunt Eunice and Cousin Sally, and they asked me questions upon questions about the folks at home.

Now, I suppose I ought to tell you who Aunt Eunice and the others were, and some particulars about them. Aunt Eunice was my grandmother's sister. She was a slender old lady, with a pleasant face, and a quiet way of talking and moving about.

Cousin Sally was her daughter. She was a very lively person when she was in good spirits, but was apt to be melancholy and fretty when things went wrong. She had four children, Molly, Bert, Kitty, and Rosalie. Molly was sixteen years old, very pretty and good-natured, and always full of fun. Bert was fifteen. He was quieter than Molly, but liked to have a good time as well as she did. Molly and Bert were working in the Corn-shop this summer. The Corn-shop was two miles down the road, beside the river, near, if not just where the Riverton Casino is now. They used to go to work at six o'clock in the morning, and leave the shop at six in the afternoon. Of course it was then too early in the season for corn, so they must have been putting up something else —green peas, perhaps; I never thought, till this moment, to wonder about it, but I know that they worked there, putting up something.

Kitty was twelve years old, and went to school. Rosalie, also, went to school, on pleasant days, when she felt like it; but she had not yet begun to attend regularly.

Kitty's toothache got magically better while her mother and grandmother were asking their questions, and when they had done she proposed showing me over the place.

"We'll go through the barn first," she said, "and come round by way of the orchard and the garden."

"You keep out of the garden," said Cousin Sally. "I don't want three children traipsing over my garden."

"But I want Lucy to see how nice it looks," said Kitty.

"She can see well enough from the orchard," Cousin Sally replied. "Don't you go into the garden. You mind, now."

First we stopped to look at the chickens. There were several broods of them. Some were like tiny, fluffy balls of yellow and white, and one family were older, larger, and longer-legged. How they did run around, picking in the gravel, and crying: "Peep, peep, peep!" And every minute or two some mother hen in one of the coops would call her own little flock, and they would go skurrying to her to get the tidbit that she was clucking about.

There were two dishes on the ground in front of the piazza, one of food and one of water. One of the bigger chickens tried to push his way up to the water while a number of little ones were drinking, and crowded a baby chick into the dish; but Kitty rescued the unfortunate, wiped

it with her apron, cuddled it in her hands, and breathed on its down till it was dry again. She put one of the soft, live little things into my hands, too, but it acted so frightened that I was glad to let it go. I wanted to stay and watch them, but Kitty said no, there was too much to be seen ; so on we went.

We went into the barn. The front part of it was a carriage-house, and the buggy was there. There were pieces of harness hanging on the walls, also tools of various kinds and a lantern. The floor was clean excepting for hens' feathers and wisps of hay, but there were a good many cobwebs up aloft. A swing hung from the beams, and I wanted to stay and swing, but Kitty said no, we would swing after I had seen the place.

In the back part of the barn were the stalls for Charlie, the horse, and Fannie, the cow, but neither of them was there. Overhead was the hayloft, nearly full of new hay.

Out in the barnyard was the pig-pen. Rosalie stirred the pig up with a stick, to make him grunt; but I did not like pigs, so we went to see the hens, and Rosalie threw corn at the old rooster until he charged at us. The henyard fence was between us and him, but we sprang

back, half frightened, and laughing, and Prince began to bark (as Kitty said), with all his barkum.

Then the old rooster stretched his neck, shook his tail-feathers, spread himself, and crowed defiantly, and some young roosters crowed, too, and the hens took up the battle-cry, and you would have thought Pandemonium was loose; until suddenly Rover lifted his voice in one long, deep bark, as much as to say: "There, there, that will do!" and all the hubbub stopped at once.

I was astonished.

"Do you suppose they understood him?" I asked Kitty.

"Of course. All animals understand each other," said Kitty.

"Yes," I said, "I know they do; I've heard them at it, but I never knew it with my own ears before. If animals can understand each other and people too, why can't people understand them, I wonder?"

"Some people can," Kitty replied. "There were some Indians camping out down here in the woods last year. That Indian man could understand what animals said. Birds would perch on his shoulder and hand, and talk to him, and he would talk back to them, and they understood him—birds and squirrels and chipmunks."

"In fairy stories, the way anyone gets to understand birds is to eat a bird's heart," I informed them. "If you want to understand animals, you must eat an animal's heart."

"I've eaten a chicken's heart, but I can't understand chicken talk," said Rosalie.

"And I've eaten turkeys' hearts and lambs' hearts, but I can't understand turkeys and lambs," said Kitty, smiling.

"They must have been common chickens and turkeys and lambs," I said. "It must be one that is different from any other—a white raven with a single black breast-feather, or a fox with only one white hair in the end of his tail."

Kitty laughed. "That's a fairy story, Lucy; fairy stories are not true."

I was silent for a moment. I knew, of course, that fairy stories were not true, but it always vexed me to have people say so, in that superior tone. Then I said: "They used to be true. Perhaps they are true now; with the right persons perhaps they are true."

"Well," said Kitty, still laughing, "maybe I am one of the right persons. I'll be on the lookout for a black lamb with a white curl in the middle of his forehead. Come, let's go on."

It was a clover field that we came to next, and

beyond it was a blueberry pasture. I wanted to stay and pick blueberries, but Kitty said no, wait till we had more time. They were just beginning to be ripe, she said ; there was time enough.

" See that big rock down there ? " said Rosalie, pointing to a great boulder in one corner of the field. " That's Sam Cobb's biscuit."

" What a funny name ! " I exclaimed. " What do you call it that for ? "

" Because it's the name of it," said Rosalie.

" Sam Cobb was a man who used to live here," Kitty explained, " and they call it that because it looks like a biscuit and it belonged to him."

" So it does," I agreed ; " like a raised-biscuit.

" It looks like a giant's gravestone," I continued.

" So it does," said Kitty, " I never thought of that."

" Or it might be a witch's house, or the door of a dwarf's cave," I went on.

" A what ? " asked Rosalie.

" A dwarf. They live under the ground, and have big rocks over their doorways. You can't tell them yourself unless you have the fairy sight, but animals can see what people can't."

" Rover," said Kitty, pointing to the rock, " is that a dwarf's door ? "

Rover barked one deep bark and Prince a lot

of noisy ones. Prince ran a little way toward the rock, barked at it, and ran back again.

"How funny they act," said Kitty. "It must be a dwarf's door. Let's go knock, and ask if he is at home."

"Oh no!" I said, shrinking away. Of course I did not truly believe this nonsense, but I liked to make believe. I did it so thoroughly that I really thought I was afraid.

"What would he do to us?" asked Rosalie.

"Turn us to stone, or something," I whispered.

Kitty walked slowly toward the rock, smiling roguishly. I felt a delicious thrill of fear. "Oh don't, Kitty!" I entreated.

Kitty went on, with Prince at her heels yapping and sniffing the ground. "Run, Rosalie, run!" I cried; and we ran away as fast as we could go, till we reached the orchard.

Kitty came after us, laughing and out of breath. "You little humbugs!" she said.

Without giving us a chance to reply, she began to point out the greenings, the baldwins, the nodheads, the russets, the porters, the pumpkin sweets, and all the other trees. She showed me one with a crotch in it large enough for a seat. She climbed up. "See, isn't this a nice place to sit?" she asked.

Then she jumped down again. "Let me boost you, Lucy," she said, and she lifted me as high as she could; but not being a good climber, I had to give it up. Rosalie did better; and she looked so romantic sitting among the green leaves, that I made up my mind to "try, try again," until I was able to do it. I wanted to try then, but Kitty said no, the garden came next.

We went right into the garden, and had walked along three rows of tomatoes before I remembered that Cousin Sally told us not to go there.

"Kitty!" I exclaimed. "Your mother said we mustn't come here!"

"Why, she knew I would," replied Kitty.

"But she said not to," I persisted.

Kitty turned and faced me. "You think that I'm not minding my mother, do you?" she cried. "But I am. She's *my* mother; don't you s'pose *I* know when she means things and when she don't?"

I thought it a queer way to mind one's mother, but I said no more. We walked in single file, Kitty ahead, then I, then Rosalie, up and down every aisle of the garden, and then we came to the strawberry beds.

The moment I saw them I expected to find

some berries, and was disappointed when Kitty said that strawberries were "all gone by."

"Mother put up the last a week ago," said she. "But raspberries are beginning to be ripe, and we may have all we want; so let's go eat some."

The raspberry bushes grew along the stone wall that separated the garden from the road. There were a few ripe berries, big, dark red, and sweet, and they quenched my sudden thirst for strawberries.

"Some day soon we are going raspberrying," said Kitty, "and perhaps mother will take you and Rosalie. We are going to take a lunch, and pick all day."

I was delighted. I had never been berrying in my life, but I had read stories about children who had, and I thought that it must be one of the pleasantest things in the world to go on a berry picnic. I asked Kitty questions about it, until she brought me back to our sight-seeing by bidding me observe the heavy clusters on the currant bushes, and the bloom beginning to show on the peaches, pears, plums, and crab-apples.

When we returned to the yard she called on me to admire the pine-tree—a Norway pine she said it was—and the great maple; she told me

what a lot of lilacs and blush roses the bushes by the front steps had borne this summer; she led me around the flower-beds, to make me count the heads of pink geranium; she held me tight while I peeped down the well behind the house; she pointed out the few houses to be seen up the road, and told me who lived in them. "And now," said she, "it's supper-time."

"O Kitty!" I exclaimed, in disappointment. "Can't we go over in the woods?"

"Sometime. Not now. It's supper-time. Aren't you hungry?"

I had not thought about it, I had been so interested; but now I felt a pang of hunger, and gladly followed her toward the house.

"But after supper we can go over in the woods, can't we?" I asked.

"It will be dark after supper. Besides, I've got to go for Fannie."

"To-morrow, then?" I begged.

"Perhaps," she half promised.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH I SEE A NEW KIND OF FOG

WE had bread and milk and hot gingerbread for supper. I noticed with satisfaction that there was no cream on the milk. I did not like cream when I was a little girl.

"Fannie isn't a cream cow, is she, Cousin Sally?" said I, as I crumbed my bread.

"No, she's a red cow," answered Cousin Sally.

"Brown, you mean," Kitty corrected.

"She's what you call a red cow," her mother rejoined.

"I don't mean that," I said. "I mean, she doesn't have cream on her milk."

"Doesn't have cream on her milk!" exclaimed Kitty. Cousin Sally's face turned red and she looked at me sharply; she thought that I was finding fault with the milk she had given me.

Aunt Eunice smiled. "We skim off the cream to make butter," she said. "All milk has cream on it after it stands awhile. Doesn't Mr. Crowe's milk always have cream on it?"

"Yes," I answered; "a lot. I have to skin and skin, even after Grandma thinks she has taken it all off for me. I thought perhaps cows were different about cream. I was going to wish that Mr. Crowe's cow were like yours."

"Mr. Crowe's cow!" said Kitty, laughing again. "Why, Lucy, Mr. Crowe has ten cows."

"I wish we had ten cows," said Rosalie. "Then we could sell milk and butter, and I could ride to town on the wagon."

"Well, I don't want ten cows, if I have got to milk them myself," said her mother, emphatically. "I think it's a shame for Bert to go playing base-ball every evening. I've done the chores for a week, and I think it's time somebody else took hold."

"Why didn't you tell him to come home? You never say a word against his going," said Kitty.

"Oh, well, if the boy wants to have a good time, let him," her mother returned in an indulgent tone.

"Molly and the boys won't be home to-night," said Kitty to me.

"The boys? What boys?" I asked.

"Why, our boys. Didn't you know that I had three brothers?" said Kitty, teasingly.

"You haven't, Kitty Reed!"

"She means Phil and Dick," said Rosalie.

"They are young men who board with us," Cousin Sally explained. "They work at the Corn-shop, making cans."

"Why aren't they coming home?" I questioned.

"They are all going down to Morrill's Corner. The boys are going to play ball and then they will all go to the lodge, and they'll stay over night, with some friends of theirs."

"The lodge? What is 'lodge'?"

"Why, they belong to a temperance society, and it is lodge night."

"Is it like Mason lodge? Grandpa belongs to that."

"Something; not exactly."

"Cousin Sally," I asked, "when do you milk the cow?"

"After supper," she answered. "If you want to see me, you may, if you don't get too sleepy before Fannie comes home. Kitty is going after her right away, but sometimes she strays off, and it's hard to find her."

"May I go with Kitty?" I asked.

"No, not to-night," said Cousin Sally.

Kitty went for Fannie, and Cousin Sally fetched Charlie home from a nearer field. While she was tending him Rosalie and I tried to swing, but we could not go very high because there was no one to push us.

"I wish we had Dick here to swing us," said Rosalie. "He swings me every time I want him to. He swings me till my toes touch the wall. Did you ever swing as high as that?"

"Once I did," said I. "It was at the islands. I swung 'way up into the tree and 'way out over the bank. A man pushed me. I was scared; it seemed as if I were swinging over the water, and I felt as if I should fall."

"Did you holler to him to stop?" asked Rosalie.

"No; I didn't like to."

"Why not?"

"I didn't want him to know that I was scared. I kept thinking he would stop; but he didn't, he pushed me higher and higher."

"What did you do?"

"I just held on, and shut my eyes, and scringed inside, till he got through," I answered.

"I'd have hollered, if I'd wanted to," said

Rosalie; "but I shouldn't want to. I shouldn't be scared. I wish I had a swing like that. This one doesn't go high enough for me; I'd like to go fifty hundred times higher."

I did not reply, but I thought to myself that she must be braver than I was.

Kitty was gone a long time. The chickens went into the coops, under their mothers' wings, and the dogs took their forty winks on the piazza. Rosalie and I sat on the steps and talked, while we fought off midges and mosquitoes, which swarmed about us. Away in front and to the right of us were woods, and as twilight began to grow a mist rose from the ground, rose and rose until it reached half-way up the tree-trunks, like a pale, purple wall. It was beautiful. I asked Rosalie what it was, and she said, "Fog."

"Why, it isn't like the fog in Portland," said I. "The fog in Portland is white or else gray, and it comes toward you out of the air, over the water; it doesn't come up out of the ground. I didn't know fog ever came up out of the ground. I didn't know there was any fog in the country."

"Well, there is; there is every night," said Rosalie.

"Are those woods just like other woods?" I asked.

"Yes," said Rosalie.

"Have you ever been there?"

"No," she said.

"Then how do you know they are like other woods?"

"Because they look like the other woods," she answered.

"There isn't any fog in front of the woods across the road," I said by way of argument.

Rosalie admitted this, but she persisted in declaring that all woods were alike. She said that she had been in all the other woods there were, and they were just exactly alike.

But I knew better. I myself had been in several woods, which differed considerably. And I had never heard or read about such a fog. I felt in my heart that there must be enchantment about it, it looked so mysterious and wonderful. I resolved to ask Kitty to go over there some day.

I watched the mist as it drew denser. The tops of high bushes lifted out of it, like islands above the sea. I thought how different the fog at home was; how it sailed in from the harbor, high in air, till it came to our garden, and then how some of it settled softly down through the tree-tops and the rest of it went flying and float-

ing over our house and Aunt Priscilla's. The recollection made me homesick; but just as I began to feel that way Fannie and Kitty came through the gate, Fannie vigorously switching her sides with her tail, and Kitty brushing about with an alder twig.

"Don't the skeeters bite?" Kitty cried. "Oh, I've had the awfullest time! Somebody let the bars down, and Fannie got out and went 'most a mile up the road. I hunted in the woods first, but Sam Jensen told me where she'd gone, and I after her lickerty-cut. She's always up to some new trick.

"I tell you, Lucy," she continued as we walked by her side, "it's no joke keeping a cow. You don't know how lucky you are to be a city girl."

"Does she run away often?" I asked, sympathetically.

"Whenever she gets a chance," was Kitty's answer.

"Kitty," I said, "why don't you take her painter along and tie her to a tree?"

"Her painter?" Kitty repeated in a puzzled tone. "What do you mean by her painter?"

"The rope that was hanging in her bin," said I. "You said it was to tie her up with."

Kitty began to laugh. "In her bin!" she repeated derisively. "We don't keep our cow in a bin, we keep her in a stall; and I guess it's a halter you're talking about. What in the world is a painter?"

"The rope they tie boats with," I answered meekly. I felt foolish, and made up my mind to be careful and not ask any more questions. I did not like to be laughed at.

Cousin Sally had done the chores and was waiting for Fannie, a little out of sorts at having to wait so long. She put a lantern down on the barn floor, and sat upon a small stool beside the cow. The milking was a remarkable performance to me. I was very much interested. I crouched close to her and watched. Twice I asked her if it didn't hurt the cow.

"No," she answered, rather sharply the second time. "Do you suppose she would stand stock-still if it hurt her? What a foolish question!"

So I asked no more questions, but watched and marvelled. The faint lantern-light made the dark barn seem full of hobgoblins; Cousin Sally was a witch; I was a story-book girl having an adventure. At length——"I want to go to bed," said Rosalie, sleepily, coming from the carriage-house, where Kitty had been swinging her.

"Well," her mother replied, "tell Kitty to put you to bed."

"Come, Lucy," said Rosalie.

"I don't want to go now," I said; "I want to see the cow all milked."

"Yes, you must," Rosalie insisted. "Mother, make Lucy come to bed."

"Yes, Lucy," said Cousin Sally; "go with Rosalie. You know your mother told you to be good, and mind Aunt Eunice and me."

I wondered how she knew what my mother told me. I got up and followed Rosalie. As we went out of the barn Charlie began to stamp in his stall and whinny. "What makes him do like that?" I asked.

"Because—horses always do that way," Kitty answered.

"Do they?" I said. "What makes them?"

"Oh, I don't know," she said, impatiently. "What makes you open your eyes, and talk and walk and run?"

"Why—because," was my lame reason.

"Well," she returned, triumphantly, "that's just what makes horses act their way—because."

I felt very much snubbed, and silently followed her to the house. It was dark now, and the stars were coming out. There was a shrill sound

in the air, but I was so downcast that I did not ask Kitty what it was.

She got a light, and we went up to the sitting-room chamber. The room seemed all white. There were two bedsteads with starched valances around them. On one bed our night-gowns were laid out, and my empty valise hung on a bed-post. Suddenly into my mind came my mother's parting charge, to shake out my dresses. I was conscience-stricken. A great wave of mother-sickness swept over me; my heart was flooded with it. All at once I felt tired and sleepy and desolate. Yet, even at the same time, I noticed that Rosalie was putting on a nightcap, and the fact surprised and amused me. I went to sleep with those two ideas following each other through my brain: "I want my mother! Rosalie wears a nightcap! How funny she looks! Mother, mother!—Rosalie, nightcap, funny—mother, mother!"

CHAPER IV

IN WHICH WE BEGIN WITH WAR AND END WITH PEAS

WHEN I woke up in the morning the sun was shining through closed blinds directly on one of the brass knobs of Aunt Eunice's big mahogany bureau, and the brass knob reflected the gleam to my eyes. I blinked and moved my head out of its way, and in doing so hit Rosalie's head and wakened her.

"Let's get up," I said.

"No," she answered, drowsily; "I don't want to."

"I'm going to," said I, starting to slip out of bed; but she seized my sleeve and held me fast, and when I tried to pull it away she kicked me.

"You lie still," she commanded; "I don't want to get up yet."

I remembered that last evening Rosalie's will had to be my way, and, thinking discretion the better part of valor, lay down again. But every moment of waiting was hard; for from outside came the twitter of birds, the crowing of roosters, the cluck-cluck of the mother hens, and the sunshine suggested pleasant things. As soon as Rosalie dropped off, loosing her hold of me, I sat up cautiously and looked at her. How funny she looked! Her curls were tucked out of sight in the nightcap, and her round face was framed by the ruffle like a white-frilled daisy.

I put one foot out of bed, and was about to spring down, when she woke again, and gave me another vigorous kick. This was more than flesh and blood could stand; I kicked back and scrambled out in hot haste.

That roused her in earnest, and she jumped out after me. I was no match for Rosalie, either in strength or pugnacity, and I should have run away if I had not hurt my foot when I kicked her; but I could not escape. As I put up my arm to fend her off, the door opened, and Aunt Eunice came in.

"Highty-tighty!" she exclaimed. "What's this? A quarrel? What is the matter with your foot, Lucy?"

"I hurt it," I answered, "when I kicked Rosalie."

"A pretty story to tell!" said Aunt Eunice. "What did you do that for?"

"Because she kicked me," I replied.

"Twice," said Rosalie, in a boastful tone.

"You are a naughty girl," said her grandmother, sternly. "You ought to be ashamed to treat your visitor so."

"I didn't want her to get up," said Rosalie, as if that were sufficient excuse. "But I don't mind now—I guess I'll get up myself. Let's see which can dress first, Lucy."

We hurried into our clothes, and Rosalie won the race. I was always slow. But when she took off the nightcap and her tangled curls fell over her shoulders, I plucked up heart; my hair was shingled and only needed parting.

"It will take you a long time to comb your hair," I said, suggestively.

"I can't comb it myself," she replied. "It never gets combed till afternoon; folks are too busy."

Aunt Eunice had been putting the beds to air while we were dressing; now she came and buttoned our clothes. "Go feed the chickens," she said, "and then watch for Kitty. When you see

her coming let me know, so that I can put breakfast on the table. Then run and call your mother. Now off with you."

It was a beautiful morning, with a soft, warm breeze. All the grass, everywhere, was glittering like a sheet of silver. When I went close to it I found that the grass and clover were covered and bound together with delicate webs that held shining dewdrops in their meshes. All the fields were spread with them. It looked like jewelled lacework—as if fairies had been spinning overnight. Every drop flashed with rainbow colors; you could have put your hands down and scooped up a hundred rubies, sapphires, and emeralds at once. I asked Rosalie what made it so.

"Spiders. They do it every morning," she answered.

Then I remembered that I had often seen a spider's web here or there in our garden at home, laden with morning dewdrops, and had thought even that strangely beautiful; but to see all the world decked with gossamer and gems was a wonder indeed.

Rover had gone with Kitty to pasture the cow, but Prince was waiting for us, and you would have thought that he had not seen us for a month, he was so joyful. He wagged all over;

every part of him was in commotion, and he barked, leaped, and raced around, all at the same time.

We fed the chickens, calling, "Biddy, biddy, biddy!" and "Chick, chick, chick!" and laughing at their cunning, comical ways. Then we counted them, to make sure that all were there. Then we went to swing on the gate and watch for Kitty.

Soon we saw her coming, bareheaded, carrying her hat carefully, and when we ran to her we found that it was full of raspberries; she had lined it with leaves and filled it to the brim; they were for breakfast, she said.

They were delicious. I had a large saucerful, sprinkled thick with sugar. They were the nicest raspberries that I have ever eaten in my life. We had raised-biscuit with them. I think they must have been a particular kind of raised-biscuit, for I have never since tasted any quite like them or quite so good.

After breakfast Kitty said that she would show me the parlor before she started for school. The parlor was kept dark, all the blinds being closed and the shades down, so at first we could not see very well; but Kitty let in a little light, and our eyes soon got used to the duskiness. Between

the front windows was a table with pink mosquito-netting thrown over the table-cloth.

"There," said Kitty, proudly, lifting the net, "see that table-cloth! Isn't it a beauty? My mother worked that before she was married. Just think, it's older than I am—older than Molly! How do you s'pose she ever did it? It took her months."

It was of blue broadcloth, worked with worsted flowers, a garland of roses in many shades of red and white and green. There were two ottomans to match it. I thought them all wonderful. Kitty showed me the place where her father once took a few stitches—"Only he wasn't my father then, you know," said she, "because I wasn't born." They were unlike the other stitches—crossed the wrong way, and "all roughed up"—but her mother had not picked them out. She showed me "the hole a moth-miller made" the very summer it was finished. "But it's the only one," she said, "for ever since then we've looked it over carefully once a week all through moth-miller time." Then she covered it with the netting again.

Then she led me to the whatnot, which was crowded with pretty things. There was a house covered with shells, and there were ornaments

and daguerreotypes. But the two upper shelves were the most attractive; they were full of little sugar-and-flour paste figures, such as were sold for a cent or two in the candy-shops at that time—animals and birds, fastened on foundations of pink, or white, or yellow. There were dozens of them. There were a barley-sugar lamb, too; a red and white striped candy-basket, containing hearts, diamonds, and ovals, which were printed with pink-lettered sentiments—such as, for instance, "I Am Thine," "Will You Be Mine?" "When Can I See Your Pa?"; a tiny bird-cage of pink candy and white lace, holding a yellow bird; a white candy pillow with chocolate-faced twin babies bound to it by a checkerberry band; and a twisted pipestem cane. I never saw such a collection anywhere else outside a candy-store. "O Kitty! O Rosalie!" I cried in rapture. "Where did you get them?"

"We had them Christmas," said Rosalie.

Now, I had a sweet tooth, and it filled me with astonishment to think of their withstanding such temptation from Christmas till summer time. "Don't you like candy?" I asked.

"Like it?" said Kitty. "Of course we do. But this candy isn't good to eat; it's made to look at. Besides, it's too pretty to eat."

"We had some other candy," said Rosalie; "this isn't the only kind we had. We ate a lot."

"But, don't you feel like eating candy any other time? all the time?—if you could get it, I mean."

"Oo! Yes!" said Rosalie, smacking her lips. "But this is to keep, and I don't want to eat it."

I did not make any reply, but I wondered at them. I did not understand it, and I don't understand it to this day.

Rosalie, Prince, and I went down the road a little way with Kitty when she started for school, and coming back we thought that we would go into the woods.

By this time the twinkling web-work over the grass had disappeared; but the dew had not dried up; it had only rolled down among the herbage, so that the first step we took into the wayside wet our feet. At the same moment Cousin Sally's voice rang out from the dooryard: "Here, here! where are you going? Come out of that wet grass this instant! Come here; I want you."

"It seems as if I never should get into the woods," I said, wistfully, as we obeyed.

"What do you want to go in the woods so for?" Rosalie asked.

"Oh, because," said I.

"Why?" she persisted, curiously.

"They are so beautiful," I answered.

"Do you think they are beautifuller than the orchard?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," I said, with decision.

"They're not," said Rosalie, with quite as much decision. And then she asked: "Why?"

"The orchard isn't so mystery–ous," I said.

"What does that mean?" she asked.

Now, I did not know how to tell her. I liked the woods because they were so full of dim, green lights and shadows, and because, whichever way you looked, there was some little, lovely opening, leading you did not know where, and seeming to promise: "Come this way and you shall see something more satisfactory than anything you have seen yet." I hesitated, and tried to put my idea into words, but did not succeed very well. "Because they are so greenery and whithersoever," I said.

Rosalie did not understand, and I don't wonder that she didn't. But when Rosalie did not understand anything, she laughed at it; she used to go into peals of merriment over some of my most serious answers; and I had the very foolish fault of feeling uncomfortable when I was laughed at.

Rosalie laughed now, laughed and laughed, but when her mother asked her what she was laughing at, she could not tell. "It's something Lucy said about the woods," she replied. "I can't remember what it was, but it's the funniest thing I ever heard of;" and off she went into fresh peals of laughter.

"You silly child," said Cousin Sally, laughing a little, too. "Here's something more sensible to do than laughing at you don't know what. Grandma wants you to shell peas for her. You and Lucy can take the pan here on the piazza."

"I don't want to shell peas," said Rosalie. "Lucy and I want to——"

"Want to what?" her mother asked.

Rosalie hesitated. She did not know what she wanted to do. "Go up in the barn chamber," she answered, on the spur of the moment.

"You must shell the peas first," said her mother.

"Can't we take the peas up there?" Rosalie asked.

"Ye—s," said her mother, doubtfully; "you may if you will promise to do them right straight off and bring them down, so that Grandma can have them to pick over and wash."

Rosalie promised, and with the basket of peas

and a pan we started for the barn chamber. We had to climb a ladder something like a ship's ladder to get to it. It was a large, empty room—that is, empty excepting for some things piled up in one corner and some old harness and rope hanging against the wall.

Reaching almost to the floor was a window, wide open, looking out on the yard and the woods. We sat down before it and began our task; but the world seen from that window looked so different, so beautifully different from the way it looked when we stood on the ground, that I paid more attention to it than to the peas. I felt as if I had discovered a new world. I would keep seeing something that pleased or surprised me, and then Rosalie would have to look, too, and we would talk about it; so that before we were half done we heard Aunt Eunice calling: "Children, aren't those peas ready yet?"

For a minute or two we pretended not to hear, we were so ashamed to say no; but Aunt Eunice called again: "Children, aren't those peas ready yet?" and Rosalie had to answer.

"Bring them here, and I'll help finish," her grandmother returned.

We prepared to go down. Rosalie took the basket and I took the pan of shelled peas, but

there was the heap of pods on the floor. "What shall we do with the pods?" I asked.

"We must take them to the pig after we get them all," said Rosalie.

"We shall have to come up again and get them," said I; "we can't take them now."

"I can take them now, in my apron," she returned.

"You can't carry them and the basket too," I objected.

"No, that's so," she replied. "Lucy"—as if a bright idea had struck her—"let's throw them out."

"Then we shall have to pick them up. I'll tell you what let's do; let's tie a rope to the basket and lower it down."

"Oh, yes, let's," Rosalie gayly agreed.

So we got a long rope from the wall and tied it as strongly as we could to the handle of the basket. We decided to put the pan of peas into the basket, and then we could each take part of the pods. We lifted the basket over the window ledge and lowered away, but as it went down it grew heavy and so nearly pulled us after it that to save ourselves we had to let go. At the same time our knot unfastened.

Bang, bang! "Cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep!"

"K-a-r-r-r-e!" "Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow-wow!" "Bow-wow-wow!" "For mercy's sake, what is the matter?" That was the chorus that arose as we sank down among the pea-pods and looked at each other with frightened eyes.

"Mother will kill us!" Rosalie half whispered, at length.

"O Rosalie!" I cried. "She won't!"

"She will," Rosalie declared. "And when Molly and the boys come home and find there aren't any peas for supper, they'll kill us, too."

Of course I knew that she didn't really mean what she said; we were not likely to be killed, even once: but I was afraid Cousin Sally might send me home; that was what Rosalie's "kill" meant to me. I was picturing myself sadly and silently riding away by Mr. Crowe's side, when Aunt Eunice called again: "Come down and help the chickens pick up these peas."

In an instant we had our heads out of the window. Sure enough, there were the chickens busily pick-picking as if their very lives depended on it, while the mother hens had their necks craned between the bars of their coops in vain effort to reach the field of action. Rosalie, whose spirits always came right back to the surface, like a cork in water, began to laugh; but with the

thought of being sent home in disgrace weighting mine down, I could not see anything to even smile at.

Aunt Eunice was standing in the doorway. "Rover," she said to the hound, "go and tell those chickens that you think they have had enough.

"And you two scapegraces," she continued, looking up at us, "come down here and pick up every single pea, or you sha'n't have any for supper."

We picked them up, while Rover and Prince kept off marauders. When we presented ourselves before Aunt Eunice we were two very dirty little girls. She made us wash our hands, and then tell her how we came to drop the basket out of the window.

"Now that was a silly thing to do," she said. "What did you want to do so for? Why couldn't you have gone up after the pods?"

Although we had no special reason to give, I felt that some explanation was needed; and after a moment's hesitation I answered: "To save time."

Aunt Eunice suddenly put her apron to her face. I thought that she was crying, and I felt heavy-hearted. Rosalie, also, seemed much con-

cerned. "We'll go and get them now, Grandma," she said.

"Very well," Aunt Eunice replied in a muffled voice, as if she found it difficult to speak at all. But when we came back with the pods, tiptoeing, half afraid to enter on her grief, she was moving about her work, with a cheerful face. She gave us each a short-cake, made of the leavings of her piecrust, and sent us off to carry the pods to the pig, bidding us be careful and not give him basket and all.

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH, FINALLY, I REACH THE WOODS

ON our way back Rosalie said: "What shall we play?"

"Let's go up in the barn chamber and look out of the window," I proposed.

"I'm tired of that," she replied. "Let's play house. I'll let you have one of my dolls. I'll let you have half of my playthings, too. Come in the sitting-room; they're under the piano."

We went into the sitting-room, and she got out her playthings. She had some little chairs, a sofa, a bed, a table, a clothes-horse, and some dishes of various kinds. Among them were two pitchers of bronze glass, which greatly took my fancy. They were bronze at top and bottom, and the middle part looked as if it were sanded. "O Rosalie!" I exclaimed, "let me have one of those?" And she consented.

One of the pitchers was somewhat broken; I reached for the whole one.

"You can't have that one," she said; "I want that one myself."

I was disappointed; but I put it back without protest, for, of course, they were her things.

"But you may choose chairs," she said.

So I chose one made of willow, with a green bottom, and one a little smaller, a wooden rocker. But Rosalie objected again. "You can't have both the big ones," she said.

"Then let me have both the little ones," said I. "I don't like things so different; I want them to match."

"No; they're mine, and I'm going to have what I want," she said, stubbornly.

"Then I won't play," I exclaimed in anger.

"I don't care; I don't want you to," she retorted.

I went out into the kitchen. Aunt Eunice was busily stepping back and forth between the pantry and the stove with pans of cookies, and she did not notice me. Pretty soon Rosalie came out. Then Aunt Eunice asked: "Can't you find anything to play?"

"Lucy won't play," said Rosalie.

"She doesn't want me to play," said I.

"Oh, there! I should be ashamed! What's the matter?"

"She wants everything her own way," I complained.

"She wants all the best things," said Rosalie.

"No, I don't," I disputed her. "I only want things that match. I want the big chairs or else the little ones."

"Bring your things here and put them on the table," said Aunt Eunice. "Put all the big things on one end of the table and all the little ones on the other end."

Rosalie did so, putting the broken pitcher with the little things.

"Now get your dolls," said her grandmother.

Rosalie brought the dolls. One was a large china-headed doll, and the other was small, with a Parian head. The small one was the prettier, but the large one had the most clothes.

"Now," said Aunt Eunice, not leaving her cookies, but talking as she worked, "one of you have the big things one day and the other the little ones, and the next day change about. How will that do?"

"That will do," we assented, relieved and pleased with the arrangement.

"And why don't you take your things up to the barn chamber? One of you can have one side of the room and one the other. The beams will make good shelves for your dishes."

Rosalie skipped with delight at the idea.

It took several trips to carry everything up there, but when we had done so and placed them in position along opposite sides of the room, we both exclaimed: "Don't they look nice?"

Rosalie said that I might have the big things to-day. My doll, she said, was named Tilly, and hers was Lilly.

I did not like the name "Tilly," so I proposed naming my doll over again.

"What are you going to name her?" Rosalie asked.

"Dolladine," I answered. "In my 'Chimes for Childhood' there's a piece of poetry about a doll named that, and a picture of her, too; and she is perfectly lovely."

"What does she look like?"

"It tells in the poetry. It says:

'This is her picture—Dolladine—
The most beautiful doll that ever was seen!
Oh, what nosegays! Oh, what sashes!
Oh, what beautiful eyes and lashes!

'Oh, what a precious, perfect pet!
On each instep a pink rosette;
Little blue shoes for her little wee tots;
Elegant ribbon in bows and knots.'"

"Isn't that sweet!" exclaimed Rosalie. "I want that name for my doll. You can get another for Tilly."

I thought of a number of names, but none seemed appropriate. At length I settled on Zareffa, the name of a dancer in the "Arabian Nights." "It means 'elegant,' and I think that her clothes are elegant, Rosalie," I said.

Rosalie looked pleased. "Oh," she returned, "they're nothing to what she's going to have when Molly gets time to sew for her."

We played all the forenoon; we took our children to walk, to school, to church, to a dance, and to the islands. Aunt Eunice sent Rover to the foot of the stairs with a paper bag of cookies in his mouth, and then we gave a party.

But after dinner we did not want to play dolls. I did not care much for dolls, as a usual thing, although once in a while I liked to play with them. If I could have had the kind of doll that I wanted—one with joints and real hair—I should have cared for her; but I did not care for common ones, with heads like graven images, and

with no "give" to them. The way that I enjoyed dolls best was to dress them at night and leave them sitting in their chairs, and then to imagine that while I was asleep they came to life and had a lovely time.

We swung awhile, and wandered around the yard and the house; then Rosalie put Prince through some tricks; and then I proposed going up to the barn chamber again. "I've thought of a new way of looking out of the window," I said.

The new way was to lie down on the floor with our heads toward the window, and look out backward. We could see the tops of trees stirring in the breeze, and also great white clouds sailing over the blue.

"Rosalie," I said, "did you ever find stories in the clouds?"

"No," she answered. "How do you?"

"See that little white cloud. Don't you think it looks like a bird?"

"Like a white pigeon," said Rosalie.

"And that big one is an eagle."

"Are eagles white?"

"I don't know," I answered, "but cloud eagles are. And that monstrous big one is a mountain with valleys, and there's a castle on one end."

"What's that little one coming after it?" she asked.

"That's a—that's Princess Snowwhite, fleeing from a dragon. That's the dragon behind her, with his mouth wide open. He's going to swallow her, if she doesn't get to the castle in time."

It seemed doubtful whether she would. Nearer and nearer the frightful dragon came. We grew excited. "O Lucy, Lucy!" cried Rosalie. "O Lucy, Lucy, she'll get swallowed! Oh——!" as the Princess slipped safely in through the open castle door.

We found several other stories; and then—what do you think?—we went to sleep.

It was Kitty's voice that roused us. "Lazybones," she was saying, "this is a pretty welcome."

"Kitty!" I cried, sitting up, and rubbing my eyes. "How came you back so soon?"

"On my two feet," she answered. "And it isn't so very 'soon'; it's after four o'clock. I told the teacher that I had company at home, and she let me off. What have you been doing to-day?"

We told her all about it. She laughed at our pea-catastrophe, especially when we told her how Aunt Eunice cried. I did not see anything in

that to laugh at, and her lack of respect shocked me; but when she saw my puzzlement she laughed again.

"What shall we do now?" asked Rosalie.

"Kitty," I pleaded, "I want to go over in the woods. Do go, will you?"

"That's just what I came home for," she replied.

So we merrily tripped over to the woods. How beautiful it was in that dim, cool place, with its dusky shadows and with the beams of sunlight slanting in. There was no underbrush, and the trees were not crowded. The ground was glazed with pine needles in some places and softly carpeted with moss in others. How good the evergreens smelled, the damp earth, and all the fine little plants and vines growing here, there, and everywhere.

"Keep still," Kitty whispered all at once, stopping as she spoke.

We listened. I could hear the breeze in the tree-tops, but nothing else.

"I thought I heard a squirrel," said Kitty, moving on again.

"Now we are in the 'green, green wood,' aren't we, Kitty?" I said, happily.

"Yes," she answered, in a brief, inattentive

way. "Hark!"—stopping again for a moment, and then going on.

"Are there squirrels in these woods?" I asked.

"Of course. There is everything here that there is in any woods," she answered.

"Bears?" I asked.

"No; it's only the backwoods where there are bears and wild-cats."

"Rabbits?"

"No," doubtfully; "I never heard of any.

"Wolves? Are there any wolves, Kitty?"

"Why, no; of course not. Wolves! What an idea! But there was a fox around here last winter; he stole a lot of hens, and nobody could catch him."

"In the 'Robber Kitten' there's a story about a fox named Reynard," I began, but she cut me short with a whisper:

"There! See! See! There he is! Up on that bough! Do you see him, Rosalie?"

Yes, Rosalie's sharp eyes found him; but I was near-sighted, and could not see him so far away.

"What's he doing?" I whispered.

"Sitting on his hind legs, eating something out of his fore paws," said Rosalie, softly.

"'Feasting on blossoms and buds,'" I said. "What kind of buds does he eat, Kitty?"

"Squirrels don't eat buds," said Kitty.

"In my 'Chimes for Childhood' there's a piece that says:

'Come ye, come ye, to the green, green wood,
Loudly the blackbird is singing,
The squirrel is feasting on blossoms and buds,
And the curling fern is springing.'"

Kitty faced me with scorn.

"Poetry tells all sorts of perfectly absurd stories," she said. "Bert had a squirrel for a pet once, so I ought to know."

Unconsciously we had raised our voices and alarmed the squirrel, who ran off among the branches. We went quietly along, till the girls found him again. He chattered at us, but did not run away.

"See his tail go!" said Rosalie, laughing softly in her merry way. "See his ears twitch! Oh, there he goes! Oh—my—what a jump! Ha, ha, ha!" And all the while I could not see him. It was very tantalizing.

"See, there are ripe bunchberries," said Kitty, pointing to clumps of scarlet berries, in a little opening ahead of us.

"Are they good to eat?" I asked.

"Yes; only they prickle your face if you're not careful," she replied, stooping and picking a handful of bunches.

We ate some, and trimmed our hats with some more. Then I wanted to go farther along this inviting path, but Kitty said no, we had gone far enough.

"It's 'most time for me to get Charlie and go for Molly and the boys," she said. "And I've got to go for the paper, and do an errand, too, at the Corner. Grandma said she would send Rover for me when it was time, and I must stay near."

We turned back, and pretty soon met Rover. Kitty would not let us go with her when she went for the horse; she said that we might scare him and make him hard to catch.

Aunt Eunice called us in to "fix" for supper; and it took so long to comb and curl Rosalie's hair that weary Time slipped away and fetched home Molly and the boys.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH MOLLY AND THE BOYS COME HOME

ROSALIE'S last button was going into its button-hole when we heard their voices singing far down the road.

"There they are! There they are!" cried Rosalie. And away we ran to the gate.

Bert was driving, sitting squeezed in between Molly and Kitty; and the two young men were on behind, with their legs hanging down. They were all singing:

"'Shoo, fly, don't bodder me—
For I belong to Company G,'"

and they sent the refrain out loud and strong. Molly waved her hand to me, and when they came near enough she called: "Hello, Lucy! Hello, Lucy!"

One of the young men jumped off and leaped toward us, flourishing his arms. It seemed as if he had dozens of arms, he flourished them so. Rosalie, with a shriek of laughter, ran away; but I was so astonished and frightened that I could not move. When he came in front of me he stopped, and made a very low bow. "How do you do, Miss Lucy?" he said. "May I have the pleasure of your company?" And then with a sweep and a toss he lifted me to his shoulder. Molly, Kitty, and Rosalie thought it fun, and supposed that I was enjoying it.

He marched with long strides to the house, and up the piazza steps into the kitchen, where Aunt Eunice and Cousin Sally were getting supper.

"Hello, Grandma!" he sang out; "here's a parcel I've brought you. Where shall I put it?" And he professed to think that they wanted me placed on the stove, or the mantle-piece, or the middle of the supper table—he didn't know which.

Cousin Sally laughed and protested, bidding him stop his nonsense and behave; and when he held me over the table, she cried in dismay: "Dick Jones!—you acting boy! Don't! What are you doing?"

All the while I could not utter a sound, and it

seemed as if my heart went whirling like the wheel of a watch when the spring breaks. "Is this young lady tongue-tied?" he asked, at length setting me down.

Then he seized Aunt Eunice and kissed her with a sounding smack, and catching Cousin Sally round the waist, he danced her about the kitchen, almost bumping against the table, and grazing the stove.

"Stop, stop!" cried Aunt Eunice. "You'll have the table cloth off, and break every dish on the table! Do stop, Dick! What makes you carry on so?"

Cousin Sally boxed his ears; whereupon he sat down and pretended to cry, peeping at me from between his fingers. I suppose I was staring with horrified amazement, for he and everybody else (the girls and Philip, the other young man, stood in the doorway now) laughed at me.

"Come, come! Give us some grub!" he cried. "I'm hungry as a bear, and if I don't get something to eat, in two jiffs I shall make 'way with all the kids I can lay hands on." And he reached out for me.

I shrank behind Molly, and stumbled against Philip. He took my hand, and laughingly held Dick off. Then I felt safe, and gradually grew

calmer, so that I could even enjoy Dick's nonsense—that is, when I was at a distance from him, and his jokes were directed toward the others.

When Bert came in from putting up the horse, and they had all made ready for supper, we sat down to it. It was the noisiest meal that I had ever known. Molly and Dick were continually chaffing each other, and they used some of the most extraordinary expressions that I ever heard. For instance, Molly had considerable to say about a "Hannah Cook"; something or other "didn't amount to a Hannah Cook," and somebody or other "didn't know any more about it than a Hannah Cook." When I asked who Hannah Cook was, they all laughed. Dick said that she was "a peculiar party who didn't know t'other from which"; but Molly told me that there was no such person. "It's only something I say when I mean that anything amounts to just nothing at all," she explained.

We had the peas for supper, and Kitty told about our accident. They laughed at that too. Dick declared that he had never eaten such tender peas before. It was the way they were "fixed" that made them so tender he said. He had heard of dropped eggs, but never before of dropped peas. When his ship came in, he meant

to take us aboard as cooks—Hannah Cooks. And so this nonsensical fellow rattled on.

Philip was a quiet young man, sober but pleasant-looking. He had a moderate way of speaking, and seemed a little shy. At least, he sometimes blushed when Molly directed her sallies against him. He did not say much, but enjoyed the others' fun.

Bert was quiet, too, for the most part, but he had fits and starts of jollity. I don't believe he liked children very well; he did not notice Rosalie and me at all. He did not seem half so boyish as Dick, although Dick was older than he.

Cousin Sally was as gay as a girl. She joked and laughed with the young folks as if she were one of them. I was so mazed and entranced by all this liveliness, that I kept forgetting to eat, and then Dick would reach over slyly and steal my cake and sauce from me.

After supper, Cousin Sally and Bert did the chores, Kitty went for the cow, and Molly and Dick washed dishes. After the dishes were washed Molly came out and sat on the front steps, and I followed her. I admired Molly very much, she was so pretty, merry, and good-natured.

"Well, Lucy," she said, "how do you like the country?"

"Oh, I like it," I answered with enthusiasm. "It's so green all over, and it's so still. It's like living in the graveyard, only there aren't any graves."

"Horrors!" Molly exclaimed, with a start. "For goodness' sake, what put that into your head?"

"I mean the graveyard up by North School. It isn't like other graveyards; it's a beautiful place," I said in explanation. I could not think what had displeased her. Often at school when I should have been studying my lessons, I used to be gazing out on the tree-tops and the blue sky and the clouds over that graveyard, and wishing that I could be out there. I used to imagine that I was the little ghost of myself, playing among the gravestones, instead of my real self, in the school-room. Many a time I have watched that little ghost of myself jumping off the stones or skipping among the grass and flowers, and could see the white and the black stones showing through her as she ran. My grandfather sometimes took me there to walk; he liked to look out on the harbor and to read the quaint old inscriptions. I did think it a very beautiful place.

Molly looked into my face for a moment, and then she laughed. "Well, Lucy, you've hit the

nail on the head this time," she said; "one might as well be dead and buried as live in this forsaken place. I like to be where there are folks."

Just then I heard the sound that I had heard the evening before, and asked Molly what it was. "Frogs," she answered. They were in a pond a little way off, where Kitty, Rosalie, and I could go for flag root.

The fog was rising again over by the woods. It stayed till morning, she said, and then it went away. She did not think there was anything magic about it. And she laughed again.

By and by, Cousin Sally called Molly in and proposed "a sing," and all the others flocked to the sitting-room, where Aunt Eunice already sat reading the newspaper. She sat in the big rocking-chair with arms, and Cousin Sally took the one without arms. Dick tilted his chair back against the wall, and winked and made faces at me. He would pretend not to notice me for some time, and all at once he would look at me and twist his face up horribly. I could not keep my eyes away from him; it made me think of Bloodybones and Blunderbore; it seemed as if his face must be lying in wait for a chance to make itself up; it was fascinating, but it was also very dreadful.

Molly played, and they all sang ever so many songs. "Marching through Georgia," "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching," "When Johnny comes marching home," and "'Way down upon de S'wanee ribber," were some of them; and there were two that took my fancy, though I have forgotten them now. One of them was "Old Uncle Ned." I had never heard it before, and when they sang:

"'Hang up de shubble an' de hoe,
Take down de fiddle an' de bow,'"

and told about

"Old Uncle Ned,
Who had no wool on the top of his head
In the place where the wool ought to grow,"

I was delighted.

The other was either "Mrs. Mulligan's Ball" or "Tim Finnigan's Wake," I am not sure which; but it was a lovely tune, and to please me they sang it several times over.

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH WE GET INTO TROUBLE

IT was not the sun that woke me the next morning, but a banging sound downstairs. It wakened Rosalie also.

"What's that?" I asked.

"I guess it's a tin pail banging," said Rosalie, rubbing her eyes. "Mother is putting up the dinners."

"Putting up the dinners?" I repeated, questioningly.

"For Molly and the boys. To take to the shop, you know."

"Oh, let's get up and see them go!" I cried, springing out of bed.

Rosalie was willing, so we dressed and went down. Philip was finishing his breakfast. Molly

was at the looking-glass, curling her front hair. Bert and Dick were outside, harnessing Charlie. Cousin Sally was busy with some tin pails and a lot of food, and she had her hat on.

"Are you going, too, Cousin Sally?" I asked, walking up to where she was at work and resting my arms on the table.

"Of course," she answered, curtly. Then she added in an apologetic tone, "I have a raging headache, and it makes me cross. I don't half know what I'm about; I've given Phil all the pie, and I haven't put a bit of cake into your pail, Molly."

"Never mind," said Molly. "I guess I can worry along without cake one day, and Phil sha'n't have all that pie, if you did give it to him. There"—with a last glance in the mirror—"I won't struggle any longer; it's no use to expect frizzles to flourish in a fog."

At that I looked out of doors for the first time, and saw that it was a damp, cloudy morning, that the team was ready and the boys were waiting.

"Come, Molly," called Dick, "stop your primping. Phil, you slow-poke, hurry up your cakes. And, for pity's sake, don't wait to crimp your mustache."

They crowded into the buggy, as they had the night before. Rosalie and I stood at the gate and watched them drive away. Dick threw kisses at us till they were out of sight.

"Wouldn't it be nice," I said, "if they had a magic carpet, and all they had to do was sit down on it and wish they were at the Corn-shop, and they'd be there? Then your mother wouldn't have to go."

"Nobody ever had such a thing," she returned, scornfully.

"Yes, they did, too; Prince—I forget his name—had one. It's in a story in the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"I don't believe it," said Rosalie.

"I'd like to have one," she said, after a pause. "Was it a whole carpet? Wouldn't it look funny flying through the air?" And she laughed.

"I think I should rather ride in a horse and carriage, though," I said; "you can't ride in a horse and carriage every day."

"You can't ride on a magic carpet every day, either," she replied.

"But you can make b'lieve you can," I rejoined.

"How can you?"

"You can sit down on a carpet, cross-leg, the

way the Turks do, and shut your eyes, and make b'lieve hard, and you can seem to be going."

"Can't you sit in the buggy when it's in the barn and make b'lieve be going?"

"No, I can't," I answered; "that's real, and you have to have your eyes open."

"I can," said she.

"Your make-b'lieve isn't like my make-b'lieve," I replied; "you only pertend."

"I don't pertend," she retorted.

"Yes, you do, too," I declared.

"Children, stop quarrelling, and come and eat your breakfast," Kitty called from the doorway.

We started to run, but Rosalie, determined to have the last word, said as we went: "Molly and the boys can ride in a horse and carriage every day; so there, now."

It was on that day, after breakfast, that we hurt Rover. I never shall forget it. You remember, I told you about Rover's sore back? Well, we were swinging in the barn, Kitty, Rosalie, and I (I was in the swing, and Kitty was pushing), when Rover got in my way, and the corner of the swing-board struck the sore place. Poor Rover! He howled with pain and snarled and showed his teeth. I don't believe he really meant to hurt me, but he looked so enraged that

I was frightened. Indeed, we were all frightened out of our senses. I mean that, "out of our senses," because if we had been sensible we should have stayed there and shown Rover that we didn't intend to hurt him and were sorry for his suffering; but instead of that we took to our heels.

We rushed out of the barn, across the yard, up the steps, into the entry, and shut the door in Rover's very face. We were trembling with fear, all of us, and Rover's crying made us cry, too. Aunt Eunice must have been upstairs making the beds, for she did not come to see what the matter was.

We stood there crying with him for several minutes, not daring to open the door, until at length an idea seized Kitty, and she went and fetched the sugar-bowl. Then she opened the door a crack.

"Good Rover! Poor Rover!" she said, coaxingly. "We didn't mean to, Rover. I'm so sorry, Rover. Dear Rover!"

If Rover had been angry enough to hurt us (I can't decide whether he was or not), he got over his rage quickly, for he let us come out and pat and caress him, and he ate sugar from our hands. I suppose Prince was there and had some

sugar, too, but I don't remember about Prince. We carried the sugar-bowl to the barn, and left it there when Kitty went to school.

After Kitty had gone, Rosalie and I thought that we would make raspberry jelly.

We picked two burdock leaves by the wayside, and puckering them up with our left hands, filled them with our right. We carried the berries to the barn-chamber, put them in a little tin pail, mashed them, and poured the juice off into the bronze pitchers. This brought us to a standstill.

"You have to have sugar for jelly," I said.

Now, one would think that we would have remembered the sugar-bowl downstairs, but we did not. Instead, we went to Cousin Sally, who had returned, and asked her to let us have some sugar to make jelly.

Cousin Sally's headache must have been raging harder than ever, for she was testy and would not give us a bit. We went out disconsolately and sat down on the piazza.

"We can't make jelly without sugar," I said.

"Sometimes she gets over it," said Rosalie.

"I wish," she went on, "that Kitty had stayed home to-day; Kitty knows how to talk her 'round." She did not say this disrespectfully, nor did I think of it as a disrespectful speech. It was a fact that

Cousin Sally could be persuaded, and that Kitty could be very persuasive.

"What do you s'pose Kitty would say?" I asked.

"She would go in and get the sugar out of the firkin, and then she'd say, 'Mother, I've taken some sugar for Rosalie to make jelly with.' And then mother would say, 'You put that sugar right back; I can't afford to waste sugar on children.' And Kitty would look awful sorry, and go back like this"—(here Rosalie sprang up and crossed the piazza in a mournful, unwilling way). "And when she got to the firkin she'd say, 'Mother, if I put half back, won't that do?' And mother would say, 'No; and for mercy's sake don't stay here bothering me. I'm just ready to jump; everything needs to be done first, and I don't know which to begin on.' And then Kitty would say, 'I'll help you a lot, mother, if you'll let Rosalie have the sugar.' And mother would say: 'Well, she may have it this time, but this is the very last time I shall let that child have sugar.'"

"Why don't you do that way?" I asked.

"They won't let me work; they always tell me I'm in the way. Besides, I should laugh if I pertended; I always laugh when I pertend."

"You said you never did pertend," said I.

"I don't pertend!" cried Rosalie; and she flew at me and thumped me against the wall.

"Children, children!" exclaimed Cousin Sally, hastening to the door, "what are you doing? You'll drive me distracted! What is the trouble?"

"We want some sugar to make jelly," said Rosalie, quickly.

Her mother smiled, in spite of the headache. "That's a queer reason for beating Lucy," she said. "You can't have any. I can't afford to keep letting you have sugar to play with. But if you will be good and not tease, I will take you up to Mr. Low's this afternoon. I'm going up to see about some hay. Remember, now, I sha'n't take you unless you are good."

"Where does Mr. Low live?" I asked Rosalie, as we skipped out to the barn.

"Up to Duck-Pond," she answered.

"Duck-Pond!" I exclaimed. "Oh, yes; I forgot all about Duck-Pond. I'm so glad! I want to see it. Is it Mr. Low's?"

You remember that in one of the "Lucy Books" it tells about a little duck-pond and house that Royal made for Lucy to keep a pet duck in? I had a notion that this Duck-Pond,

of which I had so often heard, must be such a one as Lucy's.

"I don't know," said Rosalie; "I guess it's Mr. Low's though."

"Is there a house, too?" I asked.

"Lots of them," said Rosalie.

"Why, how many ducks are there?" I asked.

But she made me no answer, for just then one of the hens began to shrill forth "K-a-r-r-r-r-e!" and looking up we saw a large bird in the air.

"Mother! Mother!" Rosalie screamed. "There's a hawk after the chickens!"

Her mother came hurrying to the door, and looked.

It was a dark bird and it flew swiftly. All the chickens chirred and ran in a panic to their mothers.

The hawk flew quite near, circling, and beating his wings in a peculiar way; then soared again, up, up, looking smaller and smaller upon the gray sky, till I could not see him.

Cousin Sally told us to sit down in the barn and watch, and if the hawk came again to frighten him off. She was so anxious that she kept coming out to look herself. But the hawk did not come back; perhaps, she said, he had found a meal somewhere else.

We kept on the watch, running and playing about the yard, until a sudden shower drove us into the barn. Still we watched, although, as Rosalie said, it wasn't likely that he would come in the rain; besides, the chickens were safe under their mothers' feathers. After the shower the sun shone brightly, and the chickens came out and shook themselves, stood on one leg, winked with one eye, preened and pecked and peeped, and did so many cunning things that we forgot the hawk.

Something else that I thought very curious took up our attention, also; the ground seemed to be covered with tiny hop-toads, little bits of ones, thousands of them, merrily hopping everywhere. Rosalie said that they rained down. She and Kitty had seen them before, after a shower. We thought it strange that we had not noticed them falling in the rain. We took them in our hands; we set them on our finger-tips and let them hop off. Some of them were so tiny that we could not handle them.

I thought that I should like to take some of them home to Bobby; so we got the little tin pail that we had mashed our raspberries in, and undertook to fill it with hop-toads. But they would not stay in it; while we were catching

numbers three and four, numbers one and two would take a mean advantage of us and hop out.

All at once Cousin Sally came through the barn, and she called to us angrily to come into the house with her. She held the sugar-bowl in one hand.

"You naughty, naughty children!" she cried, before we were fairly in the kitchen. "You have disobeyed me, and wasted a lot of sugar. Lucy, you are older than Rosalie, so you are the most to blame. What did you do such a naughty thing for?"

Neither of us knew what to say, we were so taken by surprise and so unconscious of having done wrong; we stood in silent bewilderment, looking at her and at the sugar-bowl.

"Why don't you speak?" she said.

"We didn't," said Rosalie.

"Didn't what?" asked her mother.

"I don't know," said Rosalie.

"Took the sugar-bowl out to the barn and helped yourselves to sugar. Now, whose idea was that?"

"We didn't take it," I said.

"Didn't take it?" cried Cousin Sally. "Don't add to your naughtiness by telling wrong stories. Here is the sugar-bowl; I found it in the barn

where you were playing, and more than half the sugar is gone."

"We didn't take it," said Rosalie.

"Why, Rosalie Reed!" exclaimed her mother. "How can you stand there and tell me fibs?"

"It isn't a fib," said I. "We didn't take it. Kitty took it. She took it——"

But Cousin Sally interrupted:

"Kitty wasn't here. You are two naughty, naughty girls. I should think you would be ashamed, a great, big girl like you, Lucy, to set Rosalie such an example. Now, I am going to punish you, by not taking you up to Mr. Low's."

Rosalie flung herself down on the floor, and cried loudly. I stood in silent grief and dismay.

"K-a-r-r-r-r-e!" suddenly rose the shrill, distressful cry of the hens, and the chickens chirred in fright. Cousin Sally hurried out to the yard. Rosalie stopped crying and raised herself to listen; then she jumped up and ran to the door. "Oh, Lucy," she cried, "the hawk has caught a chicken!"

Aunt Eunice went to the door to look, but I did not stir. I did not care if the hawk had a hundred chickens; I wanted to go home to my mother.

"Lucy," said Rosalie, coming to me after the

hawk had disappeared, "never mind if mother did scold; she will take us up to Mr. Low's—you see if she doesn't."

I did not respond; I felt that I did not want to go up to Mr. Low's.

"Now, Lucy, don't be sulky," said Aunt Eunice. "You were naughty and deserved the scolding. And why didn't you tell the truth?"

"I did tell the truth," I returned.

"So did I," said Rosalie. "We didn't take the sugar-bowl, Grandma; Kitty took it. She took it for Rover, because the swing-board hurt him. He ate a lot, and it cured him. She did, Grandma."

"When?" asked Aunt Eunice.

"Before she went to school," Rosalie answered.

"Well, why didn't you say so?" said Aunt Eunice. Then, after a moment's pause, she continued: "Lucy, Sally is tired and half-sick to-day, and it makes her sharp, and now that she has lost a chicken, she will be more unreasonable than ever; so you children take yourselves out through the shed to the barn-chamber, and stay till dinner-time. I'll tell her about it, and she will be herself when she has time to think. Here, I am going to give you each a half-cup of sugar. Now, run."

She handed us each a cup. I held mine an instant; then I put it on the table, and ran away to the barn as fast as I could go.

Rosalie followed me. "Never mind," she said, cheerfully. "Mother'll get over it; she always does. She will take us up to Mr. Low's, and we shall have a splendid time. Come, let's make jelly. I'll give you half of my sugar."

I did not want to make jelly; I was sorely unhappy; but Rosalie's coaxing at length won the day, and we went on with our jelly-making.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH I AM STUNG BY A DUCK-POND BEE

BOTH Cousin Sally and I "got over it," and dinner passed as pleasantly as if nothing unpleasant had happened. After dinner, she curled Rosalie's hair, and we had on clean pink gingham frocks. Then she harnessed Charlie, and we set out for Mr. Low's.

Cousin Sally was very jolly, but she was fidgety. She fretted because the flies bothered Charlie, and kept him whisking his tail over the reins; because she hadn't cleaned every speck of mud off the left hind wheel, and one unsightly daub of it haunted her eye; because Rosalie didn't sit still; because I sat *so* still; because Charlie wanted to go fast, and might sweat if he did; and because some heavy clouds were threatening a shower, and she feared that we should not get there before it rained. Between the frets she joked and laughed a good deal. It seemed almost no time at all before we came to Mr. Low's.

Mr. Low's house was old-fashioned, and had a number of large elm-trees in front of it. We could see into the barn, which was full of new hay; and a loaded hay-rack stood there. A tall, spare man was crossing the dooryard.

"There's Mr. Low!" cried Rosalie. "Hello, Mr. Low! You don't know what we came for, Mr. Low."

"You came to see me, didn't you, Posy?" he said, coming up to her side of the buggy, and tweaking one of her curls.

"No," said Rosalie, "we didn't come for that; we came for something else."

"What did you come for, hey?" he asked, lifting her to the ground as she was preparing to climb down herself.

"Yes," said Rosalie, "that's what we came for —hay. How did you know, Mr. Low?"

Mr. Low and Cousin Sally laughed. Then he helped Cousin Sally out, and then me.

"Who is this little girl?" he asked, smiling at me in a friendly way. And when Cousin Sally told him about me, he asked me how I liked being in the country.

"I like it," I answered. "It is next best to going to sea."

"So you've been to sea, have you?" he said.

"No," said I, "I never *went* to sea, but I'm *going* when I grow up."

He and Cousin Sally laughed again; and then we saw Mrs. Low at the door. She was very glad to see us. We went into the house with her, and sat down in her cool, shady sitting-room.

Cousin Sally asked Mr. Low if he could let her have some hay, and, after they had made their arrangements about it, he went off to his work. But, before going, he said that he had gotten in his last load of hay that morning, just in time to escape the shower; and he was going to take it over to somebody-or-other's—I don't remember the name—that afternoon. (Mrs. Low told us afterward, that this somebody-or-other, being laid up with some kind of sickness—I don't remember what—was short of hay, and wouldn't have any crops, to speak of; so his neighbors, of whom Mr. Low was one, had agreed among themselves to look out for him this year, and Mr. Low's contribution was to be hay.) He was going in about half an hour, he said; and didn't the little folks want to take a "*see*-voyage" on the load?

Of course we wanted to, and, of course, Cousin Sally said yes; so, after finding that I could read the clock, and bidding me watch it and come out at such-a-time, he went away.

How Mrs. Low and Cousin Sally did talk—of everybody and of everything that had happened at Duck-Pond or Pride's Corner for months. Somebody had died, and Mrs. Low told all about the funeral; somebody had married, and Cousin Sally knew all about that; somebody had a new baby; somebody had a new horse; somebody had quarrelled with somebody else; and somebody had gone on a visit, and had some new dresses before she went. Each dress was described, down to the very buttons. Then Mrs. Low asked: "Is Molly going to the dance?"

Cousin Sally said, yes, that she herself was going to drive Molly down and wait to fetch her home, and that Molly was making a blue cambric dress to wear. Mrs. Low said that Emma Ellen was going, too, and also had a new dress; and then she got the dress for us to see—a light cambric figured with tiny deer's heads, made with a polonaise and ever so many ruffles.

"Why doesn't Emma Ellen come over?" Cousin Sally asked. "We haven't seen her for a long while."

"She has been talking about it, but there, we've been so drove, through haying, and we've been putting up strawberries, too," answered Mrs. Low. "I want you to taste my jam," she

continued; and she went and got a piece of cake and a saucer of jam for Cousin Sally, and two slices of bread spread thick with it for Rosalie and me.

"I want to know," she said, "if you are going to the raspberrying next week? Emma Ellen is, and I've about made up my mind to go along, too."

"Going? Of course I'm going," Cousin Sally answered. "I wouldn't miss it for anything. Kitty and I are going, and Molly would like to if she could. Why, everybody will be there. You must go."

Then they launched into detail—which is a grown-up way of saying that they said every little, trivial thing they could think of about it: in what field and part of the field they believed the berries would be thickest, what kind of weather they hoped and looked for, who they thought would probably be there, what they should wear, what they should take for lunch, what they should carry to get the berries in, etc., etc. I sat eating my nice bread-and-jam and drinking in delicious expectation; for although Cousin Sally said nothing about our going, Rosalie and I took it for granted.

At such-a-time we went out to the barn. Mr.

Low was ready to start, and he put us on top of the load. At first I felt afraid, for being so high up was a new experience to me; but it was also an enjoyable experience, and as we rolled slowly and creakingly along I gazed about on fields, woods, and clouds with delighted eyes. The great clouds made great shadows, that moved across the bright landscape as slowly as we were moving. Everything was fresh and richly green and sunnily pleasant-looking.

We were not alone on top of the hay, for a big boy rode with us. He was not much of a companion; he lay flat on his stomach, resting on his elbows, and whistled or chewed hay all the time. Mr. Low walked, first beside the horses, then beside the hay-rack, and now and then he talked to us as we went along.

"They have some bees down there," he said. "Did you ever see any bees?"

"Oh, yes, sir," we both answered; and I said, "I've seen bees in our garden at home. There are lots of bees there all the time, getting honey."

"So have I," said Rosalie. "I've seen bees getting honey, too."

"Of course you have. I mean, have you ever seen bees making honey?"

"No, sir," we both answered; and I said

"I've seen the honey after it's made, all in the honey-comb. I had some once."

"Did you?" said he. "And was it good?"

"Yes, sir; and it was pretty, too. It was the beautifulest thing I ever saw—to eat," I said. "It was when we lived in Eastport, when I was a little teenie-tonty girl. My father brought home a whole, great big platterful. Oh, it was a great big platter, piled 'way up high. And it was yellowy, and the honey kept dripping out till it ran over, and my mother had to turn it off into a dish. And we ate it all up for supper. Oh, I love honey-comb!"

I don't believe that Mr. Low heard much of my story, for the cart was making a good deal of noise, and I was far up above him; but the boy on the hay heard it, and he made a sound of derision, half laugh, half hoot.

"Hur! I guess you did, a lot!" he said. "You'd 'a been sick as sick—all that sweet stuff to one meal."

"We did," I said, stoutly. I did not like to have my exaggerations flatly contradicted. But the boy was firm. "You couldn't have," he returned. "You needn't think we're going to swaller that great story." So I gave in and admitted that I was not certain. "I think we ate

it all up for supper; I don't remember any more about it," I said. "I only remember about it, I don't remember any more about it."

"Never mind," said Mr. Low, "it isn't worth quarrelling over. You'll see the bees at work, and a curious sight they are. But you must look out and not get stung."

When we arrived at the place, the boy slid down, and Mr. Low climbed up and lifted Rosalie and me to the ground. He pointed out the hives, under some trees a little way off, telling us to go there and watch the bees while he and the boy unloaded the hay. There were twelve hives, on benches; the bees were flying to and from them very busily, and the air was full of murmur.

At first we were afraid of getting stung, there seemed so very many bees going and coming, but gradually we grew bolder and went near enough to see into the glass windows. If we had had somebody to explain their work to us, we might have learned a good deal about them; but we were only little girls, not used to acquiring useful information. Indeed, instead of acquiring useful information, I was rather given to imparting useless information. "Bees," I told Rosalie, "have a queen, like the fairies."

"No, they don't," she contradicted.

"They do, too," I insisted. "I know a piece of poetry that says, 'The Queen Bee sits on her amber throne.'"

"Amber? What is amber?" Rosalie asked.

"It is hardened honey," I answered. "I saw a necklace made of amber, once; it was beads, like your coral beads, only amber instead of coral, —pale yellowy, you know, instead of pink. They were carved out of hardened honey."

"My cherry-stone beads are carved," said Rosalie. "Dick carved them for me, with a knife."

"If you should get some honey and keep it till it hardens, you could get him to carve you an amber necklace," I said.

Rosalie began to dance, and sing, "I'm going to! I'm going to!" and so doing, she got in the way of a big bee. He bumped against but did not sting her, and then flew directly into my face.

Were you ever stung by a bee? If not, try to imagine that five thousand mosquitoes are nipping you, all in the same spot, and you will understand why I gave a screech that brought everybody running. There were Mr. Low and the boy and a young lady and an old lady and a middle-aged lady.

I do not recall exactly what happened then, but somebody laughed, somebody said: "Poor child!" and somebody else said that I must go right up to the house and have brown paper put on the bite. Then Mr. Low picked me up, and carried me to the farmhouse kitchen.

The three ladies put wet brown paper on the swelled place, and asked Rosalie and me questions. They asked how old I was, what my name was, where I lived, who my father and mother were, whether I had ever been in the country before, what I thought of the country, how long I was going to stay, if Mrs. Low and Cousin Sally were going to the circle, if Molly and Emma Ellen were going to the dance, whether Molly had a new dress, whether Emma Ellen had a new dress, whether the new dresses were made with polonaises, and how many loops there were in the back. This last question neither of us could answer satisfactorily, and the ladies answered it themselves, by deciding that Molly and Emma Ellen would be likely to have "all the style they could pile on," and so must have at least six loops in their polonaises.

And were our folks going to the raspberrying? they asked. We were able to inform them as to all of Mrs. Low's and Cousin Sally's plans.

The middle-aged lady and the young lady said that they were going, but the old lady said that her raspberrying days were over.

Then they gave us each a small piece of honey-comb to eat. Rosalie asked if they would lend her the saucer, as she wanted to take her honey home and save it to make beads. Of course they exclaimed, and we had to tell them what we meant. The young lady said that we were mistaken; amber was not made from honey; it was something that came from a whale. I hardly believed this; but I said nothing, and ate my honey-comb. Then they kissed us, said that we were nice little girls, and asked us to come again. "I'll take some honey-comb to the raspberrying for you," said the middle-aged lady—whose name, I afterward found out from Cousin Sally, was Sarah Googins. The old lady was "Aunt Jane," and the young lady was "Mealy" (short for Amelia), but I don't know whether they were Googinses or not.

On the way back the boy sang a song about me, a hateful, teasing song:

"'How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour?'
He stings the silly little girls,
And makes them yell and holler."

I was so angry that I would not look at him; and when, on parting, he cried, "Good-by, Silly! I'll see you again at the rosb'r'ing," I tasted a sudden bitter flavor in my cup of joyful anticipation.

Mrs. Low was very sympathetic about my sting, and got out a bottle, labelled "Balm Of A Thousand Flowers," to bathe my cheek. "Balm Of A Thousand Flowers!" How romantic that sounded! It made me almost glad that I had been stung.

When we left Mr. Low's, I said: "Cousin Sally, I haven't seen the duck-pond. Where is it?"

"Where is it?" she repeated. "Why, this is it. This is Duck-Pond." And she gave a wave of her hand that swept in the whole visible world.

I looked in every direction, but saw only dry land. "Where?" I asked.

"Here, everywhere," she answered, and in her voice was a note of impatience. I said nothing more, but my disappointment and wonder were great. There is a Duck-Pond. It is not a little play one, either; it is a large, beautiful sheet of water. But all the country round about it is called Duck Pond, also. I don't see why Cousin Sally did not explain this to me. Prob-

ably she would if I had pressed the question; perhaps she would even have taken pains to show me the pond, if she had known how very much I wished to see it. But I did not say any more about it, and never saw it till I was grown up.

All the way home Cousin Sally saluted everyone within hailing distance, and "Are your folks going to the raspberrying?" was the question that she asked of each. She called to Mr. Woodman in the hay-field, and to Mr. Little in the barn; and Mrs. Baker came up from her blueberry pasture to talk it over. Most of the women were going. It was confidently expected to be a great success.

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH WE GO FOR THE COW

KITTY, Rosalie, and I had supper early, before Molly and the boys got home, for we were all going after Fanny that night. Cousin Sally pastured her cow in Mr. Jensen's pasture, paying him for the privilege, of course. Mr. Jensen was her next neighbor up the road.

As we went along we told Kitty about the honey, and I asked her if amber was hardened honey, or if it was something that came from a whale. She answered that it wasn't either; she said that amber was the juice of a rock. "Not common rocks, such as we have around here," she said, "but a certain kind of rock that is found in foreign lands. This juice, which is a sort of yellow water, oozes out, drop by drop, and hardens, and that's amber. I read a piece in a book once that called it 'tears'; that means, you know, that it weeps out of the rock, the way tears do out of us.

"Or else, it's a tree," she added after a moment's reconsideration. "Come to think, I believe it's a tree; but I know that the amber is something that oozes out like tears and hardens."

This theory was so much more romantic than the others that I believed it at once.

Soon we came to the bars, and while Kitty was putting them up behind us Rosalie spied some blueberries; so, forgetting the cow, we began to pick and eat. They picked and ate one at a time, but I liked better to fill my palm and then sit down on the grass and eat at leisure. Just as I had settled down to enjoyment, a loud, harsh voice suddenly jarred upon us, startling me so that I dropped every berry I had picked.

"Here you there!" it cried. "What you a doin' of? What you a pickin' my blueb'ries for? Hain't you got a blueb'ry pastur o' your own? Why don't you stay to hum an' pick your own blueb'ries, 'stead o' comin' over here an' stealin' other folkses? You go hum, now, quick!"

There, across the field, stood Mr. Jensen in his doorway. He was an old man, and looked unkempt and cross.

The word "stealing" angered Kitty, and Kitty, I must confess, was apt to be saucy when she was angry. She answered saucily now:

L. of C.

"I sha'n't go home, either. We've got a right to go through, to get our cow. Doesn't my mother pay you for it?"

"She don't pay me for the right to pick my blueb'ries. What'd your mother think if we went over in her pastur aberryin'? You clear out, now, or I'll set my dog on ye."

"Oh, will he?" I said in terror; but Kitty answered, scornfully: "No; and I don't care if he does. That old dog hasn't a tooth in his head, and he likes me better than he does the whole caboodle of Jensens. But come on. We won't touch any more of his *blueb'ries*. There's Fannie's bell."

We heard the cow in the bushes over by the woods, and there we went, wading through dewy grass and clumps of lambkill and everlasting. It was twilight, and the west was splendidly red. Overhead a large, bright star was coming out. It stood directly above the point of a tall fir, and it made me think of a picture that I had seen of a Christmas-tree topped with a golden star. The round moon hung over the woods, nearly opposite the red west, and looked silvery against the rose and azure sky.

"Co', co'! Co', co'!" Kitty called, but Fannie's bell and moo sounded farther away.

"She must have gone into the woods," said Kitty. "I never saw that cow's equal for junketing off just as you get to her. Rosalie, you run over by the sumach, and stand ready to head her off if she comes that way; and Lucy, you stand over by that clump of hardhack, and don't let her go by you. I'll creep in and stop Miss Fannie's woodland stroll."

I obediently went over to the hardhack and stood, but oh, I was afraid! What could I do with a great cow, if she chose to come my way? Kitty disappeared in the dusky wood, and I lost sight of even Rosalie, although her post was not far away, for, as I told you once before, I was near-sighted. As I stood there alone in the gathering gloom, and waited for the cow to come thundering down upon me, I was fairly sick with fear. The shadows seemed full of Shapes. A whippoorwill called from the wood, again and again; his note was new to me, and to my excited fancy seemed the voice of a Being. I grew cold and trembly. Then, when I had worked myself into such a state that I felt as if I must either die or run away, Fannie came galloping out of the trees, straight in my direction, mooing with all her might; and in a frenzy I jumped up and down, screaming, "Boo! Boo!"

Probably as frightened as I was, Fannie bounded away in the right direction. Kitty and Rosalie came forth laughing.

"Well done, Lucy!" Kitty cried. "I didn't believe you had it in you 'to say "boo" to a goose,' let alone a cow." And Rosalie broke into one of her peals of merriment, which made the echoes ring.

It was slow work driving Fannie home, she was so determined to sample every kind of green stuff that she came across. She kept turning her head as if to look at us; though Kitty said, she was "seeing the moon over her left shoulder. And that means," said Kitty, "that she'll be contrarier than ever till the moon fulls again." Every once in a while she would stop short, and turn to one side, like Balaam's ass—though, to be sure, Balaam's ass did have good reason to turn aside, and Fannie didn't. Ten chances to one, she would plunge into the bushes, and we would have to plunge in after her and head her off. Then she would swing along again, lashing her tail and chewing, until she had a fresh temptation to browse or act contrary.

It was exciting to me, despite the slowness of it, that merry business of driving home the cow. I was happy in my mind in a still sort of way

also. In all my dreams of the Country, I had never imagined anything like this: to be following that tinkling bell through the moonlight, amid dewiness and sweet wild odors; not able to distinguish any object that was not directly in the light, and yet to feel sure that it was all beautiful. "It doesn't seem true, does it, Kitty?" I said.

"When you've chased Fannie as many years as I have, you'll think it seems true enough," she returned. "I'd like to have a dollar for every mile out of the way that cow has made me tramp."

When we reached home we found Molly and the boys there. Molly was helping her mother and grandmother put up raspberries. The boys were playing ball in the moonlighted yard. Rosalie and I went and stood in the barn doorway to watch them.

This was the worst stand that we could have taken, for here we were directly in range of the ball. Pretty soon it did come flying our way, and hit me in the cheek, under my eye—not the cheek that the bee stung, but the other one. It knocked me down, and for a minute or two I was half senseless; it was Rosalie who screamed.

Bert was angry. Maybe he was frightened; some people are angry when they are frightened. We will give him the benefit of the doubt. He

said that it served me right; that I had no business to be in the way. Everybody else was more feeling about it. Philip carried me into the house; Aunt Eunice put wet brown paper on the bruised place; Molly tucked a sugared raspberry in my mouth, and patted me soothingly; while Cousin Sally kept exclaiming: "What will she look like? What a fright she will be! What will her mother say? Why did you stand there? Why didn't you boys send them away? If it had been Rosalie it would have hit higher up—on her temple, perhaps—and might have killed her. Oh, dear, it hasn't broken her cheek-bone, has it? You don't suppose it will injure her eye, do you? Don't cry, Lucy, don't cry; you'll be all right, pretty soon."

When the vim of the pain was over, and I stopped crying, Dick began to "train," as Molly called it—that is, he said and did all the ridiculous, nonsensical things that he could think of; and Cousin Sally and the girls went into spasms of mirth over his antics. The others laughed, too, in their quieter way, but I was so taken up with my feelings that I did not pay much attention to him; until, when Rosalie asked: "Why don't you laugh, Lucy?" he said: "What can you expect of anyone who has been banged by a base-ball, bit-

To be following that tinkling bell through the moonlight, amid dewiness and sweet wild odors.

ten by a bee, and bathed with 'Balm Of A Billion Blooms'?" Then I came to myself enough to dispute him: "It wasn't 'Balm Of A Billion Blooms'; it was 'Balm Of A Thousand Flowers.'"

"Oh, well, I guess you'll live through it," said he, "if you've got so as to be particular about the name of the stuff you were bathed with."

"Ladies and gentlemen," he went on, "I will now exhibit my joy over our young friend's restoration to health." And with that, he did an astonishing thing: chair and all he turned a complete somersault, and came up making faces at me. And while I sat spellbound, watching his hideous grimaces, he suddenly gave a yell like a war-whoop, sprang through the door, and was gone.

Everyone was startled, and it made me so nervous that I began to cry again.

"There, there," said Cousin Sally, "don't cry, Lucy. There's nothing to cry about; it's only his fun. You had better go to bed; you are all tired out."

"I don't want to go to bed," I sobbed; "I want to stay with Philip."

"I don't want to go to bed either," said Rosalie; "I want to stay with Phil, too."

"Phil wants to read the paper," said Cousin Sally.

"Never mind," said Philip, kindly; "I can read afterward. We will go into the sitting-room, and sit in the moonlight, and you shall tell me what you did up at Mr. Low's to-day."

Rosalie told him about our afternoon; I felt tired and ill, and did not want to talk. But when she came to the bee episode, I spoke. "Seems to me I've spent the day done up in brown paper," I said.

Philip laughed a little. "Not quite all of it," said he. "You've had some pleasant things happen, haven't you? What was the nicest thing that happened to you to-day?"

"Chasing Fannie home," said Rosalie.

"Yes," said I, "it was; only it wasn't just the chasing part of it; it was the altogetherness of it."

By and by I asked Philip to tell us a story.

"Yes," he answered, "I will. Once there was a good little girl——"

"Oh, not a good little girl, Philip!" I cried. "Don't tell that kind of a story—not about a good little girl!"

"No," said Rosalie; "don't tell about her, Phil. I hate her!"

"What about, then?" he asked.

"Fairies," I replied.

So he told a fairy story. I do not remember it exactly; that is, I mean, I have gotten the details of it so mixed up with other fairy stories that I am afraid I could not tell it straight if I tried. I shall not try. But I do recollect that it was about a girl named Violet, who strayed into Fairyland, and that it ended with a fairy dance. I remember that part of it, because when he finished, he suddenly pushed open the half-shut blind, and said: "See, there they are now;" and looking out, I saw a wonderful sight—a maze of faint, dancing glow-lights, appearing and disappearing in the black shadows.

"Fire-flies!" exclaimed Rosalie.

"Are they like that?" I cried. "Are those fire-flies?"

"They are faint to-night, but some evening when the moon doesn't shine, you will see them better," he said.

I watched them with fascinated eyes. But pretty soon Philip said that we must go to bed, and so I had to leave the lovely vision.

CHAPTER X

IN WHICH WE GO INTO CAMP

"'O dear, no,
Not for Jo!
Not for Joseph!
O dear, no!'"

THAT is what Molly was singing, when, late the next morning, I went downstairs to the sitting-room. She was seated by the window, sewing on her blue cambric dress. How she came to be staying at home that day I cannot tell you, for I did not ask her; in fact, I did not think anything about it at the time. Perhaps they fell short of peas, or whatever else they were putting up, at the Corn-shop, and let Molly off until they could buy up some more. However, there she was, sewing swiftly and singing gayly, although the weather was as hot, close, and foggy-damp as a dozen dog-days rolled into one.

The moment that she saw me she began to laugh:

"Ha, ha, ha!—He, he, he!—Ho, ho, ho! Well, if you aren't a picture, I never saw one! Gracious, Lucy, you look as if it were the day after the fair! Your mother would have a conniption fit if she were to see you now! Ha, ha, ha!—He, he, he!"—and so on.

I always disliked to be laughed at, even when I could see no reason for such foolishness; but when the reason was as plain as my poor, battered and swollen face was to me then, being laughed at made me wretched; I was ashamed, hurt, and angry all at once. Molly must have seen this, for she stopped giggling, and said kindly: "You mustn't mind me, Lucy; you know I'm a giddy thing. You can't guess what grandma has for you and Rosalie. She won't let Rosalie have any till you come. Guess, Lucy."

"Dough-nuts?" I guessed, not at all interested; yesterday I had heard Aunt Eunice remark that she must make dough-nuts to-day.

"No," said Molly. "Go and see."

On the kitchen-table stood six little raspberry pies, with scalloped edges; very small ones, made in fluted cake-tins; flaky, well-browned, and crisp.

These were for Rosalie and me. Rosalie wanted to eat them then and there; but I did not feel very well, and had no appetite, even for dainties, so I said that I should keep mine till by and by.

"I shall eat mine now," said she.

"I'll tell you what," said Kitty, who was sweeping the kitchen-floor; and she stopped, and stood like a witch astride her broom: "We'll go over in the woods after I get my work done, and build a camp, a regular Indian camp; and we'll have a picnic in it, and you can eat your pies then." (You see, it was Saturday, so there was no school.)

Of course the plan pleased us, but Rosalie insisted on eating one of her pies right away. Two were enough for by and by, she said.

We were impatient to be off, and kept hurrying Kitty; but she had a number of things to do first, for on Saturdays she helped about the housework. At length she was ready, and with hatchet, knife, and ball of string we set out for the woods. We would not take our lunch yet, Kitty said; we could come back for it after our camp was done. We decided to build near the edge of the wood, so that Rosalie and I could run over there at any time to play.

The dogs went with us. Prince was in his

usual high-strung condition: barking, wagging his tail, jumping up to lick our hands and faces, scampering off as fast as he could go for several rods and racing back again, chasing his tail round and round, springing at flies, and teasing Rover. Rover was dignified, which was his usual condition. He marched sedately along, gravely investigating—now a weed, now a stone, a beetle travelling across the road, a spider's web hung between two brambles; now stopping and lingering; turning aside for a moment; going on again —but always sober and silent.

Instead of going into the woods directly opposite the house, we went down the road until the house was hidden from sight by the wayside trees and bushes. This was at my desire; I said that it would seem more like adventure into the wilderness if there were no house in sight. When we came out, I said, we should come to the highway, which would be our first sign of civilization; and going on cautiously for fear of robbers, we should suddenly see a human habitation and know that we were back in the world of men. Kitty laughed at me; she knew that I was quoting from something I had read. The words were longer than I was, she said; and besides, it wasn't "the world of men," it was the world of women.

"It will be the world of men to-night," I replied.

"No, it won't," she rejoined. "The boys are not coming home to-night. They took their best clothes with them, and are going to Sam Wilson's to stay. They'll come home to-morrow. Molly said that she wasn't going to have Bert sitting on her new dress and jamming it all up. And Phil said that he wouldn't go to a dance riding on behind with his legs hanging out. Dick said, as for him, he should like nothing better; but if Phil and Bert were going to take their clothes and go to Sam's, he would, too. I wish I could go; I'd be willing to ride on the back. I'm going to tease mother to take me."

The road just ahead and behind us seemed to end in fog—soft, gray, mysterious; the woods seemed full of fog; but when we came to the place where it had apparently been, it was not there. You could not come to it—it always seemed a little ahead or behind; and it did look so inviting—a very veil of wonders.

"Oh, Kitty, see what a pretty place!" I exclaimed, pointing into the wood, where I had espied a little open spot carpeted with moss. It was like a room with pillared walls and curtains of mist. All around the edge grew bunchberries, making a scarlet border.

"So it is," said Kitty. "And there are a lot of young spruces, too. It's just the place for us. Let's go in here."

Kitty chopped off some small spruce-boughs; and hard work it was for such young hands. Rosalie and I heaped them up together. Rover lay down on the soft floor, with his head on his outstretched paws, and watched our proceedings. Prince capered about, getting in everyone's way.

Overhead squirrels chattered and frisked, but watch as much as I would, I could not sight them, they were so quick and so far above me.

But the mosquitoes tormented us. We fought them off, and back they came in legions, shrilling their war-cry. We found that we could not work; our faces and hands were red with bloody bites, and we could only scratch ourselves and whisk the air with pine-tassels. At length Rover drew himself up and went away.

"We can't stand this, either," Kitty said, desperately, laying fierce slaps all about her. "They'll eat us up. We must carry the spruce home, and make our house in the yard. I guess we can build it in the corner of the fence."

"I'd just as lief," said Rosalie.

I did not respond. "What do you say, Lucy?" Kitty asked.

"It won't be so romantic, but I s'pose it will be convenienter," I said.

"Romantic!" she repeated, with good-humored scorn. "You are the queerest child; you always want everything to be 'romantic'; and you have the funniest idea about what *romantic* is, anyway."

"We were going to play Indian camp," said I. "You can't play Indian camp in a yard."

"Why not, I should like to know?" said Kitty.

"Because it isn't a proper place," I answered.

"You and Bobby play Indian in your yard at home," said Kitty.

"That's different," I reasoned. "It doesn't have round beds with geraniums; it has tall things, to hide behind. And the bean-poles are like woods, when you get in among them. Indians must have woods."

"Pho!" said Kitty.

"No, they don't—not always," she added, after thinking a moment. "They camp in fields, sometimes. I could build this camp in a field or in the orchard, but if the sun should come out it would be too hot for us to stay and play."

While she was talking she was tying the spruce-boughs into bundles, two little ones and one larger. We took them and hurried away, still

fanning the air and scratching ourselves as we went. Out in the road Rover was waiting for us. Kitty said that if his back were not sore we could tie our bundles on him and let him carry them for us, but as it was we couldn't.

At the corner of the yard, in front of, or rather, at the front end of the house, for the house sat end to the road, we put our bundles down and untied them.

"Now," said Kitty, "the thing is, to get a pole long enough to reach to the top of the fence, after it is stuck in the ground. I'm going to the barn, and see what I can find."

We all went. We hunted high and low through the barn and the shed, but an old broom and four feet of broken bean-pole were the only sticks that we could find, and these were too short for our purpose. Kitty eyed them considerингly. "If I could fasten them together in some way?" she said, as if questioning herself.

"What do you want to do, Kitty?" I asked.

"I want to put a pole into the ground right in front of the corner, and lace string from it to the fence, and lay the spruce on top for a roof."

"How will you get the pole into the ground?" I asked.

"I can make a hole, by pounding a short stick

in and pulling it out again; I can't use the crow-bar, it's so heavy. Then I can put the pole into the hole. I shall have to tie these together, and lace the string from the broom part to the fence pickets. I'm afraid it won't be very strong, but it's the best I can do."

So Kitty set to work. She hammered a piece of edging into the ground until her hole was as deep as she thought it ought to be, but it stuck fast, and she could not draw it out again.

"I shall have to get the fork and dig it out," she said, after working at it till her arms ached and she was red in the face.

She got the garden-fork and dug it out. This made the ground soft, so that she bored her hole and drew the stick out again with little trouble. Then she lashed the broom and the broken bean-pole together. This was a difficult feat and required our assistance; I held the poles together while she wound the string around them, and Rosalie put her thumb on the first knot to hold it tight while Kitty tied the clincher. Then she stuck the pole in, but it wobbled every way.

"We must stamp the earth up close around it, and make a little mound of rocks up around it, too," she said. "Lucy, you hold it while I stamp, and Rosalie, you hunt for stones to pile up."

Finally, the post was fixed, not very steady, to be sure, but upright in the ground. "It will stay if we are careful not to hit it," said Kitty. "And now we must lace the string across. I shall have to get a chair to stand on."

She fetched a chair from the kitchen, and then we began to lace the string. I held the ball, unwinding as she worked. It was a new ball of twine, but we reeled off yards and yards and yards of it. Some crows sitting up in the Norway pine kept cawing, as if they were counting how many we used. Back and forth went the string, in and out, around, across and back, over and over again.

"There, that's done," said Kitty, at length. "Now hand up the spruce, and I'll lay it on."

There did not seem to be so much spruce now as there seemed to be when we were bringing it from the woods, and after the thatch was on it looked very thin. But scant as it was, its weight made the post give threateningly.

"Remember, now," Kitty cautioned, "don't hit it when you go in or come out, and be careful not to lean against it while you are in there, or down it will go, and all our work will be for nothing.

"What a looking object!" she exclaimed, sitting down on the grass to rest and view her handi-

work; and then she began to laugh, in a half-vexed, half-amused way.

"Why, I think it's nice," said Rosalie. "I like it. I think it's a splendid camp."

"I'm glad you are satisfied," said Kitty. "What do you think about it, Lucy?"

Now its appearance was disappointing to my mind's eye, for I had anticipated a picturesque hut densely roofed and walled in with evergreen; but Kitty had done her best, and I was grateful. "I think," said I, hesitating between politeness and candor, "that if the top were a little thinner it would be considerably too thin."

Kitty laughed ruefully. "We shall have to get Dick to make one," she said. "He will do it. He is very obliging, only he has to have just so much nonsense over everything.

"That's the beauty of being a man," she continued, still surveying the wobbly structure, and nursing her blistered hands. "A woman will slave till her back breaks and her skin peels off, and not do half so much work as a man can do with a wink of his eyelids."

"Now, let's get our pies and have the picnic," said Rosalie; and she ran to the house for them.

"Half of them are mine," she said, as we sat down on the grassy floor of our camp and pre-

pared to lunch. "Grandma said that half of them were for me and half for Lucy."

"You ate one of yours this morning," Kitty reminded her.

"That doesn't make any difference," Rosalie returned; "half of them are mine as long as they last."

"What an idea!" said Kitty. "'You can't eat your cake and have it too.' You ate one, and have only two left. Three of these are Lucy's."

"Lucy has got to give me half," said Rosalie, in a resolute tone. "If she doesn't, I'll pinch her."

"They are mine!" I cried, indignantly, "and I shall not give you one."

Rosalie started in my direction, but Kitty pulled her back. "You stop that!" she commanded.

"I'm going to have half," said Rosalie, struggling.

When Rosalie was determined to do or have a thing she usually got her way, for she was somewhat of a spoiled darling. I knew this from experience, as I often had to yield to her. "It isn't fair," I protested. "She sha'n't have it, Kitty."

"No, it isn't fair; but, Lucy" (and here

Kitty winked at me, as much as to say, "You know what she is"), "you're not hungry, are you?"

"No, I'm not hungry," I answered; "but, Kitty, it isn't fair."

"I'll tell you how we'll fix it," she said; "you cut that extra pie into three pieces and give me one, and Rosalie one, and keep one yourself." And she winked again, as if to say, "Isn't that better than giving in to her entirely?"

I was not satisfied, but knew that it would be useless to stand my ground. Kitty cut the pie herself, with the knife that we had used in cutting spruce. We ate the three pieces slowly, and with relish. Then I suddenly bethought me that I had intended to give Kitty one of my pies. "Oh, Kitty! I meant to give you a whole one!" I exclaimed, regretfully.

"Well, it does taste more–ish," she replied. "I don't care if I do have another piece of it. You may give me enough of another to make up a whole one, counting what I've had."

"How much?" I said, doubtfully, for I was slow at figures.

"Why, two-thirds, Goosey. Can't you count?" said she. "You have given me one-third of one, now you can give me two-thirds of another, and

that will just make it. Here, you cut it this time." And she handed me the knife.

I made a cut as far as the middle of the pie, and then I paused. To this day I think it a puzzling matter to cut anything into an uneven number of equal pieces—thirds, or fifths, or sevenths—and when I was that age the task was quite beyond me. I tried to remember the look of the pie that Kitty had cut, but I could not recall it.

"Kitty," I faltered, for I was ashamed of my dulness, "I don't know how to cut out two-thirds."

"Study it out," she returned, watching me with a teasing smile.

This provoked me to action, but I would not study it out; I set the knife down swift and straight across the pie, cut it into six pieces, and gave her two of them.

"I feel drops dropping on me!" exclaimed Rosalie.

"It's beginning to rain," said Kitty. "We shall have to run for the house."

And then a sad thing happened. In some way or other, one or all of us (I don't know exactly how it did come to pass) hit the pillar and post of our camp, and down it came, whack! pinning us to the ground. The criss-crossed string

caught the buttons on our backs and held us prisoners, while the shower drenched us, and the spruce-boughs tickled our necks and legs. Such a chorus of barking, laughing, and shrieking of little shrieks you never heard. Prince wriggled out first, then Kitty freed herself, and then she released us. And, oh, dear! there lay my last raspberry pie in the middle of the mess, a complete mash, all sodden with rain.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHICH WE INSPECT TREASURES

OF course we had to change our clothes; and we got a scolding, too, from Cousin Sally, who, also, was driven in by the rain. She had been hoeing in the garden, and was tired, warm, and cross.

"Do sing something a little less foolish," she said to Molly, as she flung herself down on the sofa; "I'm sick of so much nonsense."

Molly, who was tunefully inquiring:

"'O where have you been,
Billy boy, Billy boy?
O where have you been,
Charming Billy?'"

stopped, and asked good-humoredly: "What shall I sing?"

"Oh anything, provided it's serious," her mother answered.

Molly immediately struck up:

"'Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound——'"

"Molly!" Cousin Sally exclaimed, her crossness relaxing a little.

"Isn't that serious enough?" Molly asked, innocently. "Then what shall I sing?"

"You know what I mean," said her mother; "some pleasant little song—I don't care what."

So Molly began again:

"'Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.'"

This time Cousin Sally had to try to be cross. "Molly!" she commenced, with would-be indignation, but it ended in a laugh. Then Mollie started "Annie Laurie," and Cousin Sally and Kitty joined in.

When the song was finished, and Cousin Sally was looking the picture of good-nature, as she always was after "a sing," Molly said: "Mother, I want your silver comb to wear to-night. Let me have it, will you? It will look lovely in my hair."

"No," said Cousin Sally, decidedly; "you can't have it."

"Now, mother," Molly coaxed. "Just this once. I'll be as careful as I can be."

"No," her mother answered, with great firmness; "you wouldn't be careful. You break or lose everything that you lay hands on. You sha'n't have that to destroy, at any rate."

"Now, mother," Molly pleaded. "I will be careful of it, honor bright, I will. I won't let it go out of my mind all the evening; I'll keep saying to myself, 'Comb, comb, comb,' all the time. 'Cindy Hall is going to wear her mother's tortoise-shell comb, and you want me to look as well as she does, now don't you?"

"You'll look as well as she does, without any comb," her mother returned.

"Well, just let me try it and see how it looks," Molly entreated. "Let me go up and get it," she continued; and not waiting for a refusal, she threw down her work and sprang away toward the stairs.

"Here, here!" her mother cried. "I don't want you ransacking in my things. I'll get the comb, and let you try it; but don't make up your mind that you are going to wear it to-night, for you are not."

She arose as she spoke, and started upstairs. Molly and Kitty, and consequently Rosalie and

I, followed her, Kitty telling me, all the way up, what a magnificent comb it was—wrought silver, and set with five diamonds.

We went up to the spare chamber, which was kept almost as sacredly dark as the parlor.

"Pull the curtain up a little way and open the blinds a crack," said Cousin Sally.

Molly ran the curtain up as far as it would go and pushed the blinds wide open, but her mother made her close them part way again.

Cousin Sally went to the closet and took a box off the top shelf. It was a square, black box, with tarnished brass trimmings. This she put on the light-stand, and we all crowded around, respectfully watching. Then she went to the bureau, unlocked and opened the right-hand little drawer, and took out several small boxes, which she put on top of the bureau. Then, reaching her hand into the back of the drawer, she drew forth a faded silk bag, and from this took a bunch of keys. One of these was the key of the black box, and I was breathless with excited curiosity as she slowly turned it and lifted the lid. No blaze of diamonds met my eye—only an array of pasteboard jewelry-boxes; but this multiplied my interest. So many boxes, so many sights.

She selected a semicircular box and slowly

opened it. Molly impatiently tapped the floor with one foot, and said: "Oh, do hurry, mother; we're dying to see it!"

The box was full of pink cotton-wool, and lifting a layer of that exposed a chamois-skin case. Out of this, at last, Cousin Sally took the comb. And, oh, how pretty it was!

It was not large, but it was chased and wrought beautifully, and set into the wrought work were five scintillating stones, as large as pease. I thought that they were real, true diamonds.

Cousin Sally waved it back and forth, so that they flashed and glowed. "Bend your head," she said to Molly. "There," she went on, as she placed it in Molly's thick brown hair; "it does look nice. Molly, if I let you wear that comb to-night, will you promise me solemnly to be careful of it?"

"Solemn sure," Molly promised, gayly, going to the glass, and looking at herself over her shoulder.

"You may have it," said Cousin Sally; "but if you should lose it, I would never let you have anything else of mine. I should feel dreadfully if anything happened to that comb."

"Now show us the other things, mother," said Kitty.

"You've seen them hundreds of times," said her mother.

"But Lucy hasn't," was Kitty's plea.

"Oh, Cousin Sally!" I cried.

She laughed. "Well," she said; "but you mustn't want to handle."

"No," we promised.

Molly came and sat down, with the comb in her hair. First Cousin Sally lifted the cover of a long and narrow-shaped box, and from a bed of cotton-wool and chamois took a silver arrow, which had one stone set in the shaft of it. "It goes with the comb," she said.

"I should be perfectly stunning if I wore them both," Molly hinted.

"Well, you won't stun the town of Westbrook yet awhile," said her mother, dryly. But she let Molly try the arrow in her hair.

After we had admired it to our hearts' content, Cousin Sally carefully put it back in its nest, and opened another box. This contained a slender chain-bracelet of gold, the middle of which was a large, yellow topaz in a setting as delicate as the bracelet.

Of course it wasn't a real topaz, for although Cousin Sally's folks had been better off once upon a time, they never had seen the day when

they could afford to buy real diamonds and topazes of *that* size; but it must have been a nice stone, or it would not have had so nice a setting. Molly tried this on, too, and it shone and gleamed on her wrist. It was a wonderful color, too deep for sunshine, too pale for fire. "It is like fairy gold," said I; "that's the way it looks when you see it suddenly at the bottom of a magic pool."

Well, to make a long story short, Cousin Sally showed us an assortment of treasures: a breast-pin to match the bracelet—one topaz, like a golden drop, held in little tendrils of gold; a neck-chain of twisted gold links; a string of old-fashioned gold beads, which had been her grandmother's; a ring—a circlet of twenty-four tiny rubies (we all counted them, to make sure); a large oval locket, one side of which was a miniature of her father; a cameo brooch—George Washington's head on a brownish background, something like the postage-stamps that we use to-day; a pair of long earrings—gold network, sown thick with garnets; her grandfather's silver shoe-buckles; and a fan of pearl sticks, mounted with a picture of fancy-dressed ladies and gentlemen, holding hands and skipping round a tree.

Cousin Sally told me about these things as she

displayed them: where they were bought and how much they cost, or else who gave them to her; that the buckles and the gold beads had figured at her grandparents' wedding; that my grandfather brought her the fan from Barcelona; that the ring was her engagement-ring; and a dozen other items of information. It was very interesting, and she enjoyed it as much as I did.

"There," said Kitty, when the last box was replaced in its black casket and the key was turned again, "what did I tell you? I guess you didn't think there was such splendor hid away in this house, did you?"

I looked from Cousin Sally, with her sun-tanned face and hands, her old calico dress, and her thick, dishevelled, dark hair, to the dingy treasure-box; and I enthusiastically exclaimed: "Oh, Cousin Sally, it is like looking at the dower of a gypsy queen!"

Cousin Sally laughed, as she put the box away, partly amused, partly pleased; and then, the shower being over, she returned to her garden-work, singing as gayly as a real gypsy queen.

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH WE GO AFTER FLAG-ROOT

IT was a clearing-off shower, and in the afternoon, when the sun had dried the grass, Kitty proposed our going after flag-root.

"Over where the frogs are?" I asked, eagerly.

"Yes," she replied; "but if we're not careful not to make a noise, we sha'n't see any frogs. Will you and Rosalie keep perfectly still whenever I tell you to?"

"We won't so much as wink," we promised her.

We went across a field, lately mowed, which was (as Kitty said) bristly walking; over a tumble-down, rattly stone wall; through a pasture, all hardhack and sweet fern and blueberry bushes; under a rail fence, to the outskirts of a wood. Here were more hardhack and sweet fern and

berry bushes. We had not stopped to pick blueberries, because our minds were bent on flagroot; but here were huckleberries—great, black bouncers. We simply had to stop; and we stayed until we were in danger of forgetting our errand.

Here, also, were foxberry leaves of all ages, from leathery old Sir Wintergreen, to middling-tough Checkerberry, and pale, tender little Box. "If you get just the right kind of a foxberry leaf," said Kitty, "you can chew and chew on it, the same as you do gum, and it will keep on tasting tasty."

So we hunted for just the right kind of leaves, and found plenty of them. Kitty said that early in the spring she had seen the ground hereabout red with the berries.

There were spotted red lilies around here, too, and growing near them were spires of rose-pink hardhack, which made a beautiful contrast.

"Hst! sh!" Kitty softly whispered, catching my arm. "Look over there. See?" And there, where the rail fence joined a brush one, sat the first squirrel that I ever saw in my life, a very little gray-brown fellow, with a tail as bushy as a drum-major's pompon. He was chattering shrilly, and another squirrel chattered down at him. We looked up and saw his mate on a drooping pine-

bough over the fence. He screamed, she screamed, they both screamed.

"They're calling each other names," Rosalie whispered.

This fancy so amused us that we began to giggle, and giggled ourselves into such a laugh, that we had to sit down. That made Kitty laugh, too, and she had to sit down—or, at least, she pretended so; and there we sat laughing at ourselves and at the squirrels, who darted up out of sight and scolded us instead of each other.

By and by we three sillies got up and went on. We went between the brush fence and the wood, till we came to a lane. On each side of it was a thicket of young alders, opening now and then into pretty little recesses where ferns grew. There were cow-tracks along this lane. Blue flag leaves stuck up like spears from the moist earth.

The ground kept growing damper and damper, till it was really muddy, and at length, water stood in the cow-prints, and the flag grew so thick that we could not help treading it down. "The King of Underworld is breaking through with his army," I said; and Kitty thought that "quite an idea," for it did look like an army trooping down the lane to meet us.

"He will take us prisoners," I said, "and

carry us down to his dungeons in the bog, and we shall have to live among frogs, and be bound with cobwebs and the roots of plants."

"And the stems of pond-lilies," Kitty added. Then, all of a sudden, she pinched my arm so hard that it felt as if she had pinched a hole in it; but I did not cry out, for I knew that it was her signal to keep still.

She pulled me to the right, in among the bushes, and Rosalie followed. We went on tip-toe. Kitty peeped through the foliage a moment, and then made way for me. "Peek," she said, and I "peeked."

There, right before us, was the pond, in a little circle of woods and wet meadow, but, of course, that was nothing to peep at; what had caught Kitty's ear and eye was a bull-frog, squatting on a stone near us, at the edge of the water—a big, spotted bull-frog, with bulging eyes. He sat motionless for a few moments while we watched him, then swelled his throat and uttered a great, deep sound. I had no idea that a frog could make so much noise, and it startled me into stepping back on Rosalie's toes. She screamed and pushed me, and when we looked again the frog was gone.

We went through the bushes and sat down on

a fallen tree beside the pond. The water was covered with lily-pads, like fairy rafts.

"Kitty," I said, "don't you wish that we were little enough to sit on one of those leaves, and sail, like Thumberlina?"

"Who is Thumberlina?" asked Rosalie.

"She was a teenie-tonty maiden, a little mite of a thing, as little as a thumb. She sailed on a lily-leaf drawn by a butterfly."

"I shouldn't want to be as little as that," said Kitty; "I should be afraid a frog would gobble me. Look! see the image of that swallow! Doesn't it look as if he were flying down below us?"

The pond was like a mirror, reflecting sky and trees so minutely that Kitty said she could count the leaves on the birches as easily down there as she could when she looked overhead; but wonderful and beautiful as the real world was, that world in the water was indescribably stranger and lovelier. "It is a glimpse of Fairy-land," I said; "all at once it will vanish, and nothing will be left but plain water."

"No, it won't, either," said Rosalie. "It will stay right there; it always does."

"And when we go home," I continued, not heeding her, "it will be seven years from now,

and all our folks will be dead, and the grass will be green upon their graves."

"Oh, what a—whopper!" cried Rosalie.

"Over there," I said, closing my eyes till only a thread of sight remained, and gazing among the birch-trees, whose light leaves were fluttering in the air, "over there is a Lady. She has green garments, and she is making signs with her white hands. She wants us to go with her. If we go, we shall never come back."

"Where shall we go to?" Rosalie asked.

"Down there," I answered, pointing to the vision in the pond.

"Lucy," said Kitty, "you make me think of a man who used to go around the country selling lace and lead-pencils and things. He talked like that. He was always seeing spirits and hearing voices. He was as crazy as a loon."

"How do you know he was crazy?" I asked.

"Why, because, of course he was. There are no such things, anyway. You are not really loony, because you don't truly believe what you say. But he did. Come, let's get the flag-root. I'll take off my shoes and stockings and wade in. Did you ever eat any flag-root, Lucy?"

No, I never had eaten any. Kitty said that it was middling good, especially when it was

Over there is a Lady.
She has green Garments,
and She is making Signs with her white Hands She wants us to go with Her.

sugared. Her grandmother would sugar some for us, she said. But when she gave me a piece and I tasted it, I did not like it, even middling well.

So I lost interest in flag-root, and watched the little fishes gliding in the clear water, the skippers performing gymnastics on the surface, and the dragon-flies gleaming through the air. I became acquainted with many wonders that afternoon, although I must admit it was but a bowing acquaintance. We saw a great greenish moth under some leaves, and thought it a butterfly taking a nap. Kitty said that it must be the kind of butterfly that drew Thumberlina's leaf, for one of ordinary size couldn't stand the strain. We saw a bird's nest in a maple-tree, and a hornet's nest hanging like a gray bag from a limb of an old pine. I noticed the delicate new tassels of the young pines, and the fresh green tips of the firs; and Kitty made me observe the different odors of the evergreens—the pines, the spruces, and the balsams. We saw some little balls of brownish, papery stuff, little bits of balls, about as big as the smallest marbles, hanging under the peeling bark of a rotten stump; and when we broke them open we found them full of yellow seeds. Kitty said that these were not seeds, but eggs—spiders' eggs. "One spider lays a whole ball of eggs at once,"

said Kitty. "Isn't she smart? And each egg has a spider and a web in it. The balls hang and swing in the wind all summer. When the Line Gale comes it blows them open, and when it clears off you will see the air full of spiders' webs and little spiders floating everywhere."

"Isn't it wonderful!" I exclaimed; for I hadn't a doubt that all she said was so.

We saw a kingfisher dive for food and fly away with a fish. His coming was such a sudden surprise, and he looked so large, and dived so near, and made such a strange, harsh noise, that I was frightened; but Kitty said there was nothing to be afraid of. Birds never attacked people, she said; only eagles sometimes carried off babies; but we were not babies, and there were no eagles around here. No other bird, she said, was large enough to hurt people—excepting vultures, and they would not touch a man unless he were dead.

"A roc might," I suggested. "A roc is a monstrous big bird. Rocs carry away elephants in their claws."

Kitty said that she did not believe there was any bird big enough to carry off an elephant. "It's just something that you've read," said she. "If you knew as many true things as you do untrue ones, you'd be an awful knowing child."

Under an ancient pine the cast-off needles were so thick that the ground was slippery with them, and we tried to slide on them as you do on ice. Pine-spills Kitty called them, and I wondered why they were called "spills," but that she did not know. We decided that it must be because they were spilled all over the ground.

By and by, perceiving that the sun was getting low, we started for home. Kitty said that we had better go around the pond and strike through the woods to Fannie's pasture; for as her mother was going to the dance with Mollie, the milking must be done earlier than usual.

As we were trying to cut off somewhat of our way around the pond, by crossing one end on stepping-stones, I misstepped into the water and wet my feet. When we reached home everyone was so hurriedly busy that nobody noticed my wet feet, and I did not think to mention them. Besides, there was a surprise awaiting me, that would have put the thought out of my head even if it had been there. On the arm of the sofa in the sitting-room hung a familiar-looking white dress and blue silk overskirt. I went up to them and looked carefully before I said anything, for it did not seem believable that they could be mine. I don't know why it should have astonished me,

for there was Mr. Crowe, of course, to bring anything that my mother might wish to send; but I remember it did seem like a miracle that my best dress, which I left hanging in our store-room in Portland, should be here. However, it certainly was my best white dress; there was the curious embroidered front, and there was the blue overskirt with the shoulder-straps and crocheted buttons. Yes, it was mine, beyond a doubt. How had this amazing thing come to pass? "Aunt Eunice," I cried, rushing into the kitchen, where she was hurrying to get supper ready, "how came my best white dress here?"

"Why, Mr. Crowe brought it, to be sure. How do you suppose? Your hat and other things are upstairs. Your mother sent them for you to wear to meeting to-morrow."

I ran out to the barn to tell Kitty. I knew that she had gone there to tease her mother about taking her to the dance.

"Besides, you haven't anything to wear," Cousin Sally was saying when I went in.

"I can wear my white muslin," said Kitty.

"And muss it all up, so that it won't be fit to wear to Sunday-school to-morrow."

"I'll be just as careful," Kitty promised. "Oh, mother, do let me go!"

"No, you cannot. You might as well stop teasing and go away," said Cousin Sally.

Kitty took out her handkerchief and put it to her eyes, with a soft, sniffling sound, and made a show of wiping away tears; but out of the eye farthest from her mother she looked at me with solemn intentness, as if to say, "Don't come here intruding." So I ran away, and waited for her at the door.

Soon I heard Cousin Sally's voice, raised in ire:

"Oh, dear me! You are enough to wear a saint to tatters! Run away and let me alone! You can't go, and that's all there is about it!"

Kitty came skipping out, and gave me a cheerful poke as she went by. "Can't catch me!" she cried. "Come in and see Molly; she's all ready to go, and she's fine as a fiddle. Come on!"

CHAPTER XIII

IN WHICH WE MAKE A RAID

"O MOLLY," I exclaimed, "I think you are so pretty! Solomon in all his glory is not to be compared with you!"

Molly laughed, but she looked pleased.

"Do you think I'm pretty, Lucy?" Kitty asked.

"I don't think you are real pretty, Kitty," I answered, with earnest frankness, "but I think you are kind of pretty."

Molly laughed again, but Kitty looked a little put out. "Thank you, Lucy," she said, sarcastically. "I don't think you are real polite, Lucy, but I think you are kind of polite."

Charlie, who had been ready and waiting for some time, became impatient, and began to paw the ground and call; so Cousin Sally hurried Molly away. We followed them as they drove

from the yard; then we sat up on the fence-posts and watched them out of sight down the woodsy road into the dusk, waving our handkerchiefs and shouting good-bys all the while.

When we got down Kitty said: "I think it's mean of mother not to let me go. I never went to a dance down in the hall. I'm just as mad as I can be. But I'm going to have a good time, all the same. I guess she'll find that folks can do things at home, even if they're not old enough to go to dances. I feel just like cutting-up."

"What are you going to do, Kitty?" I asked.

"I don't know yet," she answered. "I'm going to think about it. You two children keep still now, and let me think."

We kept quiet for several minutes; then Rosalie said: "Haven't you thinked yet, Kitty?"

"Yes," she answered, "I've thought. I'm going to make a raid. If you'll come easy, and won't let on, I'll take you with me."

"A raid?" I cried. "Oh, Kitty, I should love to make a raid! What kind of booty are you going to raid for, Kitty?"

"Candy," said she.

"Where is there any candy?" I asked, thinking of the parlor whatnot, and wondering if temptation had at length overtaken her.

"In the boys' room," she said, with a knowing smile.

"But, Kitty, what will they say? They won't like it," I ventured.

"They won't care at all, and they won't say anything. Molly and I often get candy out of their pockets; don't we, Rosalie? If you want some, come on."

I did want some, so I followed; but away down in my conscience I felt that we were doing wrong —or else, why must we tiptoe up the stairs, lest Aunt Eunice should hear us?

In the boys' room, Kitty opened all the bureau-drawers, and explored one or two pockets, before she found what she was in search of—a paper of candy. She undid it; it was peppermint-drops.

"Pho!" she exclaimed, disappointedly. "Nothing but peppermints! And awful strong ones, too. Do you like peppermints, Lucy?"

"No," I said; I didn't. Rosalie, also, declined them.

"I don't, either," said Kitty. "Well, 'there's more than one way to cook a hen'—let's try perfumery."

But as it happened, Dick, the one who used perfumery, had turned out the last drop.

"Dry as a bone," said Kitty, in disgust, turning the bottle upside down on the bureau, and leaving it there.

"What shall we try now?" asked Rosalie.

Kitty looked nonplussed. Then her eye lighted on a box of cigarettes, and her face brightened. "Ah-ha!" she exclaimed, and took out three of them.

"What are they?" I asked. I had never heard of a cigarette before. That seems strange, doesn't it?—that I should have lived to be eight years old and not even have heard of a cigarette. But, you see, they were not so common as they are now; and my grandfather did not smoke; and I suppose I was not very observing about such things. So I asked: "What are they?"

"Why, cigarettes," she said, in a surprised tone. "Don't you know what a cigarette is? What a ninny! They're to smoke; and I'm going to. You children can't, because Rosalie is too young, and if I should let you, your mother would never forgive me; but I'm going to smoke three—one in each corner of my mouth, and one in the middle."

"Kitty Reed!" I cried, in horror.

"Lucy Dale!" said Kitty, mockingly.

She took the three cigarettes and a match

downstairs. We went out to the barn, and there she struck a light.

"I suppose you think that I can't do it," she said, "but I can. Molly smoked one once; Dick stumped her to." And she placed them in her mouth, one in each corner, and one in the middle. She looked so comical that Rosalie and I burst out laughing.

As it is not easy to hold three cigarettes steady at once, especially when your lips are quivering with fun, Kitty kept dropping them, and they went out. So she had to give it up.

"I don't care," she said; "I did it a little while, anyway. Now let's go to bed; I've done enough for one evening."

As we went through the sitting-room, Aunt Eunice woke from the nap that she was taking in her rocking-chair and exclaimed: "Why, have the boys come home?"

"No'm; they're not coming to-night," said Kitty.

"I know; but I thought that I smelled smoke," said Aunt Eunice.

"Are you sure?" she continued. "I certainly smell smoke."

"I'm certain sure," Kitty answered.

And then we three naughty ones dashed up-

stairs, giggling, and went to bed giggling, and giggled till we dropped off in sleep; while poor, deluded Aunt Eunice went the rounds of the barn, calling: "Boys?—Dick?—Bert?—Phil?—Is anybody here?"

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH I REPRESENT NATIONS

THE next day we went to Sunday-school. The Sunday-school was in a meeting-house two miles up Duck-Pond way, on the Blackstrap road. When I saw Cousin Sally currying Charlie that morning, I inferred that we were to ride; but she said no, she was currying Charlie for his own sake, not for ours, and we must walk.

"And it's high time that you were getting ready," she added. "Ask Molly to help you."

Molly was willing, so I began to put on my Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.

Now I hope you won't think that I am bragging, but, really, that costume was something re-

markable; and this is the reason why: every article of it came from some foreign land, and each one had what I called "a history." You would have thought me a bride being dressed for her wedding if you had seen the attention they all paid me, buttoning and hooking me, and patting me down, admiring, exclaiming, questioning: "Where did you say this came from, Lucy?" "Who did you say brought this home, Lucy?" and so on. I will tell you about it; it is a rather long story, but I am sure that you will find it interesting.

You remember my speaking about the curious embroidered front of the white dress? Well, it was a lawn that came from India; and in those days, when embroideries were not so plentiful and cheap as they are now, and one spoke respectfully even of "Hamburgs," an embroidered India lawn was considered a nice dress. The front was lace-worked all over with palm leaves and singular flowers, and the embroidery trailed and meandered in vines around the skirt and sleeves. "A cap'n my grandpa knew (he's dead now)," I told them, "brought it home for his little girl; and she died; and when I was a baby his wife gave it to my mother for me, because she knew by the looks of me when I was young that I would be careful of it when I grew up."

Kitty began to laugh at this, but Molly said: "Hush up, now, Kitty; I haven't a doubt she looked so when she was young. Go on, Lucy."

The overskirt was made from an old blue silk dress of my mother's, which she had when she was a girl, and the ruffles that trimmed it were from the remains of a China silk of my grandmother's. I never called it a China silk, though; I always said, "From Far Cathay," because it sounded more romantic.

"My mother wore the dress when she was in London," I said. "She had a blue bonnet to go with it. It had pink and white rosebuds inside of it, all around the face; and she had a white lace mantilla. It was when they had the illumination about the Chimera; and she got jammed in the crowd, and tore her dress, so it could never be used for a whole dress again, and that's the reason there was some left to make an overskirt for me."

"And the stockings," said Molly, "where did they come from?" They were open-work stockings, of white thread; Molly had put one on like a mitt, and was admiring the effect of it over her white hand and arm.

"They came from Havre," I said, "but it was in Mobile that they had their history. Grandma brought them home when mother was a little girl.

She promised her that she would, before she went. But grandpa was coming to Mobile first, so he bought a present for a little girl there. She was a shipping-master's little girl; her name was Missouri Alabama (she was named that because her mother came from Missouri and her father was an Alabamarer); and the present was a handkerchief. They were done up in paper, just alike; and he gave the little girl's mother the wrong package. And my grandmother didn't find it out till the last minute, and then she said: 'Alan, you've given Allie the wrong present; you must go and change.' And grandpa said: 'I can't; I haven't time. And what would they think?' But grandma said: 'I don't care what they think. This vessel doesn't go one step until you get those stockings again.' So he went. But Allie was having a party, and had the stockings on at it, and was dancing; so grandpa said: 'Never mind.' But Allie's mother said: 'Oh, yes, indeed; your little girl would be disappointed.' So she whisked Allie out of the party, and took off the stockings. But Allie cried. And grandpa said: 'Don't cry, Allie; I'll get you a pair just like them when I go to Havre again.' And Allie stopped crying, and said: 'Do they have dolls in Havre? I'd rather have a doll.'"

"Did he bring her the doll?" asked Rosalie.

"Oh, yes, of course," I answered, emphatically. "My grandpa always does things when he says he will."

"Where did the hat come from?" asked Kitty, who was trying it on her own head.

"Mother bought it in a store in Portland," I replied, "but it was made in Leghorn. It's a Leghorn straw."

"Our hens came from Leghorn," said Rosalie.

"Did they?" said I, much interested. Molly and Kitty laughed. "Does the hat have a history?" Molly asked.

"Yes; it was last summer," I resumed. "We were going down Congress Street. We had been into almost every milliner's store, and mother couldn't get what she wanted, because it was late in the season, and all the hats were sold. And all at once she met an old friend, somebody she hadn't seen for years. And while they were talking I went back a few steps to look in the milliner's window we had just come out of, and 'way up in the corner I spied this. The milliner said she thought it was sold; that's why she didn't show it to us. Wasn't it queer that my mother's friend she hadn't seen for years should come along just then, and give me a chance to go back? Mother

says it was a coincerence, but Cap'n Weeks says it was 'a downright providence, and no mistake.'"

"But the shoes were bought in Portland, Lucy," said Kitty.

"Yes," I replied; "but you see it says 'Paris' on the trade-mark. They're French kid."

"Sure enough," said Molly. "And what is their history?"

"I don't know it," I said, wistfully. "Grandpa lost them, going home, and a lady found them and carried them to the store, and so we got them. But when they came home one of them had a gum-drop in the toe, so something must have happened."

They laughed; and Molly said: "Well, Lucy, you certainly *are* foreign."

"When I'm dressed up," said I, "I feel as if I represented nations."

"I should think you would," said Molly. "I don't suppose you would think of such a thing as playing when you have that dress on?"

"Oh, no," said I; "I might tear it, or something. I always behave when I have on these clothes."

"Then you sit down, Miss Primsy, and play Sunday-school book, while I fix Rosalie."

Kitty wore a white dotted muslin, and a pink

sash, and Rosalie a white pique without a sash. They both had white chip hats trimmed with pink ribbon. Rosalie's coral beads were around her neck, but Kitty had no jewelry.

"Molly," she said, in a coaxing way, "let me take your set, will you? I'll be careful of it."

"Emma Ellen borrowed the pin," Molly answered; "and you can't wear earrings, because your ears are not bored."

"I'll find a way to wear them," said Kitty.

"Nonsense," said Molly; "of course you couldn't wear them. How could you wear earrings, excepting through holes in your ears? Besides, you're too young to wear earrings."

"Oh, yes, I'm too young to breathe," Kitty returned, pouting. She said no more; but she was busy upstairs for several minutes after we were ready to go, and she would not tell what she was doing.

We started. The day was bright and warm. The dust lay ankle deep in the road, but we walked on the grass and now and then wiped our shoes with our pocket-handkerchiefs.

Kitty was unusually silent till we were out of sight of the house; then she took from her pocket the earrings, fastened to loops of white spool cotton. She hung the loops over the tops

of her ears, so that the earrings dangled below the lobes.

"There, now," she said, triumphantly. "Who says I can't wear earrings?"

"Oh, Kitty Reed!" we cried; and "Molly'll be mad," said Rosalie.

"I don't care if she is," said Kitty. "Mean old thing! She and mother seem to think I'm a baby. I guess they'll find out. Don't they look nice?" And she shook her head till the long earrings swung like pendulums.

The scent of new-mown hay was in the air; grasshoppers shrilled; butterflies fluttered in the sunshine. We walked on till my feet ached. We passed a graveyard and a number of farms. Then, by and by, we turned up another road, and soon came to a little white meeting-house with green doors and blinds. There were several teams fastened here and there under trees near at hand.

I looked about for the duck-pond of my dreams, but saw no signs of it. I was going to ask Kitty about it, when a group of children coming from the opposite direction hailed us:

"Hello, Kitty! Hello, Rosalie! Why, Kittie Reed, you've had your ears bored!"

Kitty held herself proudly, and did not reply;

but when we came nearer together they saw the thread, and there was an exclaiming and laughing, and an admiring of her ingenuity, that pleased her very much indeed. She walked ahead with some of the older girls, while Rosalie and I went behind with the little ones.

Soon I discovered that she was talking about me, for the girls would turn and look me over from head to foot, and I caught such scraps as these:

"My cousin from Portland . . . on a visit. . . . Every stitch she has on came from somewhere. . . . That dress came from China. Chinamen made it. . . . The silk overskirt is made from a dress her mother bought in London. . . . Her grandmother got the stockings in the East Indies. . . . Even her shoes . . . Paris . . . French kid."

I was distressed—it was dreadful to hear how she mixed up the nations; but being bashful, I did not correct her. It was a relief to me when we reached the meeting-house and went in.

The Sunday-school was like all Sunday-schools; the superintendent talked, the children sang, there was a buzz-buzz over the room when the lessons were recited, and then books were dis-

tributed and cents collected. All through the session the girls kept looking at me and whispering together, which was embarrassing, and when one girl reached over from the seat behind and, nudging me in the ribs, inquired: "Say, sissy, how did you get such a black eye?" I was very uncomfortable indeed.

After Sunday-school things were pleasanter, for the girls talked about that most interesting subject, "the raspberrying." All of the big girls were going, and one or two of the little ones. Emma Crowe knew a place where the berries were so thick that you could hold your pail under a bush and shake them in, and she would show Kitty where it was. Sue Andrews knew another place, where the ground was red with them, and the bushes—oh, my! Elvira Wood knew a nice shady place to go and eat lunch, where there was a spring. It was under an oak-tree, and the ground was mossy. Kate Jones's mother was going to carry green-apple turnovers. "The kind ma always makes," she said—"little three-cornered ones, with ruffles-like all 'round the edges." There was a drawing in of breath at this, and a smacking of lips; Mrs. Jones, it seemed, was noted for her three-cornered turnovers. Luetta Riggs had a new Indian basket,

a fancy one, to carry her lunch in. Myra Grear wondered if the Paine boys would be there, and if at lunch-time they would sing some of their funny songs. These songs were so "comic" that some of the girls had "nearly give up" when they heard them, and one girl thought she "should certainly expire."

I listened thirstily. My mind pictured the laden bushes and the crimsoned ground beneath them. I saw myself holding my pail and shaking down showers of fruit. I dipped water from the spring, and watched the flicker of light and shade on the moss under the oak-tree, while we sat feasting on three-cornered, ruffled turnovers. I fancied the look of the Indian basket—a round one, white, with red and yellow straws woven in, like Celia Tate's. I longed for the time to come when I should hear those side-splitting songs.

The walk home was hot; the sun beat down on us, and there was not a breath of air. We had not gone far when we came to some raspberry bushes by the roadside, and we went in among them carefully, for fear of hurting our clothes. Alas, for all our care, Rosalie tore her dress, and I got a stain on my precious India lawn.

"Ah-ha, now you've done it! It will never,

never come out," said Kitty, at first, and she also teasingly lamented the fact that Rosalie must "go torn forever"; but when she saw how troubled I felt about it—for it did seem almost sacrilege to stain a dress that came "'way from India"—she grew sympathetic, and comforted me with the assurance that any kind of stain would come out of white goods, and reminded Rosalie that their grandmother could darn so nicely that you would never know a darn was there.

"But you ought to be more careful," she said, reprovingly. "I haven't torn my dress, and it's thin muslin, too. That's one trouble with children; they don't seem to know how to be careful."

As she spoke, she put her hand up to her ears, and the next instant she looked frightened, for one earring was gone.

We walked back to the meeting-house, peering in the grass and dust all the way, but could not find the earring. Kitty was sure that she had had both of them when she came out of Sunday-school, for she had fingered them then. It must have fallen among the bushes when she was stooping to pick berries.

So we went home in trouble.

Nobody noticed Kitty's unusual quietness at

dinner, for Molly and the boys were comparing notes on last evening's dance. Besides this, Cousin Sally was exercised about a number of things. The tear in Rosalie's dress vexed her, and the sorry state of my travelled stockings and foreign-born shoes worried her, too.

"I suppose your mother thought that you would ride to meeting, or she wouldn't have sent those nice ones, and she will blame me," she said. "Oh, dear, I ought not to have let you wear them; but dear me, I have so many things to think of! I declare, it's nothing but worry from morning till night. Kitty, I want to know what you mean by your behavior last evening? Haven't I told you, time and again, not to have matches in the barn? How would you like to have everything burn down, and be left homeless? And what business had you with cigarettes? I should think you would be ashamed of yourself. What do you suppose Cousin Mary and Aunt Betty will say, when Lucy tells them? They will think that I have a great deal of control over my children. I am so tried with you, I don't know what to do."

Kitty did not say a word, and she had not a good appetite, although our dinner was one of her favorite dishes. It was a dish of which I had

never heard before—fried sheep's harslets, and I liked it very much.

Now here comes something foolish. I mean, so very foolish that I dislike to confess to having such a silly notion. But, as it is true, and something else hinges on it, I suppose that I cannot avoid it. For, you see, if I had not said it, thereby showing myself to be one of those credulous people who can be made to believe anything, Dick would not have taken such amused interest in me, and then he would not have asked me to go to ride, and then— "But that's another story."

(After all, I forgot to tell you what I said. But, never mind, it was only about the harslets, and was too foolish *to* tell.)

CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH DICK AND I GO DRIVING

AT about four o'clock that afternoon, while I was swinging in the barn, all alone, Dick came in, and he said to me: "I'm going up the road a piece. Don't you want to go with me?"

"It's too far to walk twice a day," I said, in a reserved way; I had not forgiven him yet for laughing at me during dinner.

"Why, I'm going to ride. I'm going to harness up now."

"Oh, yes!" I said, delightedly, forgetting my resentment.

"Well," said he, "don't you let on to Rosalie; I can't take a whole picnic. Mind, now, mum's the word. Get your hat, and slip out there in the road, and I'll pick you up when I go along."

"If I go in to get my hat she will see me and follow on," I said.

"Never mind, then; I'll get you a hat. Run out there and wait for me."

He brought me a broad-brimmed straw hat, one that Bert wore when he worked in the garden, and kept on a nail in the carriage-house when he was not using it. It was too large for me, so Dick tucked his handkerchief into the lining, to make it fit. He also pinned up the side of the brim that came next to him when we were seated in the buggy.

"I like to ride," I remarked, as we started. "I thought we were going to ride to Sunday-school, but Cousin Sally wouldn't let us have Charlie. I think children ought to ride sometimes, as well as grown folks. I think it's queer that Kitty and Rosalie have to walk to school and home again, and you big men have to be carried all the time, when the Corn-shop is only a little way beyond the school-house."

"That's all right," he returned. "We need all our strength for our work. We're worked hard down there. Why, sometimes Phil and I are so weak after our day's work that it's as much as we can do to climb into the back of the buggy. Of course, Mrs. Reed keeps Charlie for us. I don't see anything queer about it. Shank's mare is the steed for young folks."

He was uncommonly agreeable that afternoon. He did tease and talk nonsense, but he also told me interesting things about the people whose farms we passed. I am afraid those stories were not true. No, I do not mean that; I mean, I hope they were not true. I know that some of them were not. But they were certainly very interesting.

For instance: Once we came to a house on the left side of the road, and just beyond it, to another house on the right side of the road, and Dick said: "Cross-eyed people live in those two houses." Then looking gravely down into my serious, trustful face, he went on to tell the story.

"The curious thing about it," was the way that they came to be cross-eyed. One was a man and one was a woman, and when they were young they fell in love. They kept on the watch all day long, hoping to catch a sight of each other, but they were so sly about it, that they cast sheep's eyes instead of looking straight over, and the result was that both of them grew cross-eyed. "The joke of it" (according to Dick) was, that they never married after all, because neither of them "could abide cross-eyed folks."

I believed this story, without a doubt; but

when he told me that in the next house lived a man with three legs, I looked up incredulously. Still, he seemed so grave and truthful, that after I heard the story I reasoned myself into semi-belief in it.

The man had cut his leg clean off at the waist, with a scythe, one day when he was mowing, and had to have a cork leg; but after a while a new leg sprouted out where the other had been. It had not yet grown long enough to use, and Dick doubted whether it ever would be very useful; for the cork leg prevented it from growing down straight, so that the man would have "a natural straddle," and Dick thought it would be "mighty tiresome to walk straddle all the time."

I did not know whether to believe this story or not; but, after all, I thought, although it sounded improbable, it might not be impossible: when my grandfather lost his finger-nail, a new one grew in its place, but when Cap'n Weeks lost his, he never had another come; legs did not always grow out again, to be sure, but why couldn't they in some cases? What was to hinder them, if they once started?

The next story was really unbelievable when I had fully taken it in. We were approaching a little deserted-looking house, black with age, and

with ever so many broken panes in its windows. "Doesn't anyone live there?" I asked.

"No one live there?" he repeated, in surprise. "Why, that house is stuffed with people. They've broken the panes on purpose, to get enough air. When it rains they back up against the holes and keep the water out."

I looked incredulous again.

"It's a fact," he said. "There's the old man and his wife, and six sons and their wives, and each family of them has six boys and six girls. How many does that make? I never learned arithmetic."

"Didn't you?" said I. "But you can count, can't you?"

"I can count up to ten," he answered, "but not above ten. I never should know how many cans I make a day at the Corn-shop if it wasn't for Phil. He does all my figuring for me. He can count first rate; he's been to college."

So I began:

"There are the two old people and the six sons and their wives—that makes fourteen. And if each family has six boys and six girls—Oh!" I said, daunted by the size of this sum, "I can't begin at that end, I must begin the other way. If each family has six boys and six

girls, that makes twelve in each family, and six families times twelve children would be—six times ten are sixty; six times 'leven are sixty-six; six times twelve are seventy-two—seventy-two children; and fourteen grown folks added to seventy-two children are—seventy-two and ten are eighty-two, and four are eighty-six people. Eighty-six people in that little bit of a house! Oh, Dick, you're just fooling!"

Dick chuckled, but he would not own up. However, I did not believe him.

He was very kind. Once he got out to pick me an apple which he thought looked nearly ripe, and once he stopped to point out a bird's nest in a bush by the wayside.

I told him about the stain on my dress. He said that it would be easy enough to get that out —"just cut it out."

I told him how Kitty mixed up the nations. He said that it was scandalous. He had no idea that Kitty was such a "jographibbler." He must speak to Mrs. Reed about it; it would never do to have Kitty going on like that. Jography was his strong point; he must confess that he was weak in arithmetic, but he knew jography right down to the ground.

I begged him not to say anything to Cousin

Sally, for I feared that it might get Kitty into trouble. He said, all right—perhaps Kitty would outgrow it—but he should keep his eye on her.

By and by Dick stopped at a house, but he was gone only a moment. "I couldn't find him," he said, when he returned. "The old lady says he's down to Al Little's; so back we go, my dearie."

"Where is Al Little's?" I asked.

"Oh, home along," he answered. "You'll see, when we come to it." And he turned Charlie homeward.

Late afternoon sunshine was reaching into the woods, as we drove by them, brightening the shadowy aisles. We went slowly, and when we were not talking we could hear a sort of light sound, made up of various, little, soft sounds. It was so vague, that it did not seem to be an actual sound—it seemed as if *the silence were stirring a little.* You know what I mean; you must have heard it yourself, when you were in the woods; and if you never have noticed it, why, then, listen, the very next time you get a chance.

I was listening to it, when suddenly a clear rat-tat-tat-ing came into it, and Dick said: "That's a woodpecker. You don't have woodpeckers in town, do you?"

"No," I replied. "We have robins and swallows and orioles; and night-hawks, when it begins to get dark."

"If I had time—that is, if I wasn't so full of business, I'd show you a woodpecker, or at least a woodpecker's hole; but that must wait for another day," he said. "You ought to be out here in May, to hear the birds. There are more birds here than you could shake a stick at."

"Dick," said I, "do nightingales ever come around here?"

"No," he answered, "nightingales don't come to these parts; but there's a bird called the hoo-doo-bird that sings at night in the woods. It's a rare bird; only one person in ten hundred ever hears it. It sings out soft at first, growing louder, and drawling its voice, this way: 'Hoo-doo, hoo-doo, hoo-doo, hoo-oo-oo-oo-oo-doo-oo-oo-oo-oo!'"

It was a musical, long-drawn note, and I liked it. "Oh, Dick," I exclaimed, "I wish I could hear it!"

"There's one thing against that," he said; "it's bad luck to hear it. But if you're alone when you hear it, and never tell a living soul about it, the bad luck won't touch you."

"Couldn't I tell my mother?" I asked.

"No," he answered, "you mustn't breathe a word to anyone. If you can't keep it to yourself you had better not listen for it."

"What bad luck?" I asked.

"Oh, how can I tell? All sorts of bad luck. The very worst kind."

"Fire and shipwreck and breaking your bones?"

"That's no circumstance to it."

"I don't think I want to hear it," I said; "it's too great a risk."

"Can't you keep anything to yourself?" he asked, in a quizzical way.

"Oh, yes, I do, lots of things."

"What do you keep them to yourself for?"

"Oh, I don't know—because."

"What things do you keep to yourself, now? Tell me some of them."

"I can't; I don't know any now. They're just inside things."

What I meant was, that I had thoughts and feelings that I never spoke about. Everything that happened at school or at play, or that I heard or observed at any time, I told my mother and grandmother. These I called "outside things." But, you know, you have a great many thoughts and feelings that you do not speak about—not

for any particular reason, excepting that it doesn't seem to be worth while. These I called "inside things."

At length Dick stopped before another house, which I had noticed in the morning, on our way to Sunday-school.

"This is Al Little's," he said. "I want to speak to one of those fellers over there in the pasture. You sit here, like a good little girl, till I come back."

"Shall you be gone long?" I asked, anxiously. Charlie never would stand quite still, and I was timid.

"I'll be back in a jiff," he answered. And away he went, his long legs leaping the stubbly field.

No sooner had he gone than Charlie began to browse, moving ahead as he nibbled, until one side of the buggy was tilting down the roadside bank. "Whoa, sir, whoa!" I cried, but he kept right on. To say that I was frightened would be a mild way of putting it; I was so terrified that chills ran through my bones, and my mind whirred in my ears. I looked for Dick, but he and the group of men had disappeared. I looked up at the house, but no one was in sight there either. What should I do?

More and more the buggy tipped, till it was almost on its beam ends. I held on tight, but I did not scream out. Whenever I was frightened or excited or nervous, it used to seem as if a voice inside of me were saying, over and over: "Keep still, keep still, keep still," just like a clock. It was not always so, for sometimes I could scream out as quick and loud as anyone; but generally I felt that way, and I did now.

As the buggy inclined, I, being so little and light, swung around until I hung almost up and down, parallel with the seat. My hat fell off into the dust. Pretty soon, I thought, I should be pitching out after it.

Would Dick never come? It seemed as if he had been gone for hours. The flies bothered Charlie, making him stamp, thrash his tail and neigh, and he kept jerking the buggy. I shut my eyes and waited to be overturned. I opened them again, because I couldn't help it. And there in the road, by the edge of my hat brim, what do you think I saw? I saw a glint of gold, that I knew at once must be Molly's earring.

Of course I was surprised. "This must be the place where we picked the raspberries," I said to myself; but I was not familiar enough with the road to recognize the spot, and was so

nervous and frightened that I could not gaze around me.

Anyway, there was the earring, and I must get it before Dick came, for if he found out about it poor Kitty would never hear the last of it. But how could I get out of the buggy? I dared not try while Charlie was acting so.

I waited. Very soon he noticed a choice morsel of leafage hanging above the road, and backed the buggy up again. How he did it without wrenching something, I don't see; but he did it safely, and I dared to sit up and draw an easy breath.

He stood still for some time in his fresh feasting-place, so I gingerly climbed down, got the earring, and put it in my pocket. Then I thought: "If I stay out, Dick will think that I was scared, and he will tease me; if I get back, he will never know that I haven't been there all the time." So I gingerly climbed back. Then I thought: "Suppose Charlie takes another notion to go down the bank?" And out I climbed again.

When Dick returned I was sitting there under my hat, like a toadstool in the grass, and Charlie was lunching at some distance down the road. We walked down to him.

"What did you get out for?" Dick asked.

I did not mean to tell him, and as I had no excuse, I said nothing.

"Did you get out because you were scared?" he persisted.

"Yes," I answered, reluctantly; and then I added, "that's why I got out the second time."

"Why, how many times did you get out?" he asked.

"Twice," I answered, faintly.

"What did you get out the first time for?" he asked, looking mischievous, as he saw that I did not want to tell.

"For—something—that I—wanted to pick up," I answered, slowly and soberly, knowing that he meant to press the question.

"I guess," he said, tilting my hat up with his hand, and winking at me, "I guess—that it was—an earring."

"Dick!" I cried, in astonishment. "How did you know?"

"You haven't?" he exclaimed, astonished in his turn. "You haven't found Molly's earring?"

"Yes, I have," I said, excitedly, taking it out of my pocket. "It was in the dust, right where the hat fell. I saw it when the buggy tipped. How did you know, Dick?"

"If you'll promise not to let on to Kitty, I'll tell you," he replied.

I hesitated, but at length promised.

"Molly told me about it. She mistrusted what Kitty was up to, and sure enough, when she went to look, the earrings were gone. And afterward she found that one had been put back. Now, see here, Lucy, you let me have charge of this earring, will you? And you keep mum, too, will you? We want to know what Kitty is going to do about it."

"No," I said; "I'm going to give it to Kitty. Kitty feels awful bad; she doesn't laugh or talk or anything."

"Never you mind about Kitty," said Dick, "she ought to feel bad; she's getting too sassy by half; she needs a little letting down."

"I don't care, I'm going to give her the earring," I repeated, shutting my fingers tightly over it, as it lay in my pocket.

"Oh, well, give it to her if you want to; but promise one thing: promise that you won't tell her that Molly knows about it."

"Yes," I agreed. "I promise that."

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH I LISTEN TO THE HOODOO-BIRD

KITTY looked relieved when I gave her the earring. She was so relieved that she did not seem to have any other feeling about it. When I said, "Isn't it perfectly wonderful, Kitty?" she answered: "Why, yes, of course;" but it was evident that she did not realize how astonished she ought to be.

"What did Molly say?" I asked; for I had an idea that when you were sorry for doing anything wrong, you had to tell of it.

"I haven't told her, and I sha'n't, either," she answered. "There's no need of her knowing; the earrings are all right. I should never hear the last of it. You can't imagine how she and Dick throw things at me."

That evening, between supper and lamplight, Philip told me a story. Before it was quite done

Molly called him to come and help her hunt for the hymn-book. "You're letting that child impose on your good-nature," she said; "the minute you come into the house she takes possession of you. Tell her that you can't bother with her."

I looked at him, and he smiled reassuringly. "Oh, she doesn't bother me," he replied; "I like children." And then he went to help Molly.

I sat thinking about the story, and then about Dick's stories. Dick was something like Cap'n Weeks, only Cap'n Weeks's stories were of things that happened to him when he went to sea. Besides, Cap'n Weeks was so slow, always stopping "to rec'lect," while Dick rattled things right off. And then, Cap'n Weeks's stories were more wonderful; but, of course, more wonderful things happen at sea than on land. If Dick had only been to sea, or if Cap'n Weeks would only tell things the way Dick did——!

But grandpa and grandma and mother, when they went to sea, never had such thrilling things happen as used to be always happening to Cap'n Weeks. I wondered why. I felt sure that if I only could go to sea I should have thrilling adventures.

I strolled out on the piazza and leaned against the railing. The night looked different from any

other night that I had ever seen. All over the sky, in long, even ranks from north to south, were little, fleecy clouds, hurrying east as fast as they could go. Each cloud was distinct, and each row kept straight and by itself; they did not crowd, but every moment it seemed as if those orderly lines were just about to huddle up and rush along together. High above them was the moon, apparently hurrying west as fast as she could go. She was so bright that her radiance silvered the little clouds, but as they raced by beneath her their under parts looked dark, like gray wool.

"There go the flocks of Skyland," I said to myself, "rushing to destruction. They are bewitched—that is why they are rushing to destruction; and that is what is making their silver fleece turn black. They will plunge into the Sea of Darkness, and then they will be black all over. But the Moon is pulling a lock of each as they run past, and she will weave a silvery mantle to throw over them and make them white again. She has till morning to do it in, and if it isn't large enough to cover them all, or if any sheep don't get quite under it, those sheep must stay dark all day."

Every time the moon shone out I could see the woods, but when she was hidden they seemed to be solid darkness; and since she kept appearing

and disappearing behind the flocking clouds, the woods, also, kept appearing and disappearing in a strange, wild way. "When the witches wave their wands east, the woods go out," I said; "when they wave west, the woods are there again.

"I shouldn't like to be in them," I thought. "I shouldn't like to be even down by the gate, all sole alone." The idea made me shiver. And then I thought of the hoodoo-bird.

I wondered what would happen to me if I should hear it. I could not help listening, even while I was telling myself that I would not listen. I wondered whether, if I should just begin to hear it and should stop up my ears and run away, anything would happen to me. I wondered whether it would be possible to tear myself away after I once began to hear it, or whether it would bind me with a spell. I wondered what it would seem like to be bound by a spell, to feel that it was too late to help myself, and that I must forever and ever keep it secret or else *be doomed.*

I kept thinking and wondering in this way, until at length I did the very thing that I was telling myself I should not dare to do—I went (tremblingly) down to the gate, and stood there listening as hard as I could listen for the hoodoo-bird.

As I think back and recollect that experience,

it seems to me that three words will describe it; and those three words are *fearsome*, *alone*, and *listen*. Everything was *fearsome* to me: the woods, with their wild blackness, that might be full of lurking things—unearthly Shapes, and Creatures with fiery eyes; the sky, overrun with such a strange, vast multitude of hurrying clouds; the air, so intensely shrill with the noise of frogs and insects. And I was *alone*, *all sole alone*, in the midst of it; away from everybody; waiting and listening and dreading to hear that mysterious, dangerous, beautiful call. I shrank up close to the gate, hugging the post with both arms, pressing my face so hard against it that I could feel the blood beats in my temple, and listened, listened, *listened*, till every nerve in me seemed to be saying, "Hark! hark!"

It seemed to me that I stood there for hours, but, of course, it was only a little while. Now and then Charlie sent a whinny from his stall. Once a hen had nightmare, woke excitedly and quieted down again. Molly's gay laugh came ringing from the house. And Cousin Sally laughed. And Bert scolded Rosalie. But I heard no hoodoo-bird.

I thought I saw a shadow cross the road, at a little distance above me, and that frightened me.

I listened, listened, listened, until every nerve in me seemed to be saying "Hark! hark!"

But I did not see it again; and no doubt it was only a shadow, I reasoned. Besides, I was afraid to stir a single step. I shook with excitement, and felt cold, although it was a warm night.

All at once—what was that? I held my breath. It was certainly the hoodoo-bird! Far away and sweet and soft, but growing nearer and louder, came the musical cry: "Hoo-doo, hoo-doo, hoo-doo, hoo-doo, hoo-oo-oo-oo-doo-oo-oo-oo!"

I cannot tell you how I felt then; but it was an enchanting moment.

Again, again and again that melodious cry came floating forth; and then it was silent. I kept on listening, but I listened in vain.

Suddenly I saw a dark form stealing from the woods where the shadow had entered, and I ran as if it were after me.

"Where have you been? Your dress is damp," said Cousin Sally, feeling of my sleeve as I went panting into the kitchen.

It was on the tip of my tongue to say, "I've been hearing the hoodoo-bird," but I caught it back by the very skin of my teeth, as the old saying goes. A thrill of dismay went through me. Suppose I should tell some time? I shuddered. But I was not sorry that I had heard the hoodoo-bird.

In the sitting-room no one observed my dampness, but when Dick came in soon after, Kitty exclaimed: "Why, Dick, you're soaking! Where have you been?"

"After apples," he answered, taking one from his pocket and biting it. "Want one?"

"Green apples!" exclaimed Molly. "You don't mean to say that you've been after green apples at this time of night? You're crazy!"

Dick laughed, ate his apple, and then joined in the singing.

I did not heed the singing much; the voice of the hoodoo-bird was echoing in my ears. I wondered if Dick had heard it, but of course I could not ask him.

Well, I never told about it; and it was always a beautiful memory; but when I grew up I found out that *there is no such bird at all.* And then, of course, I came to the conclusion that the shadow I saw going into the woods and the form I saw stealing out of the woods must have been Dick, who went over there and made that hoodoo-song himself.

CHAPTER XVII

IN WHICH I GO TO A VERY NICE SCHOOL

THE next day I went to school with Kitty and Rosalie. The school-house was at Pride's Corner, two miles down the road. It seemed strange to be going to school in my vacation, but Kitty said that they had to have a summer one out here, because a good many of the children lived too far away to go in winter time when the snow was deep.

When we started, the wayside was still wet with dew, for the woods on either side of the road kept the sun from getting to work as soon there as elsewhere. The breeze was sweet with piny odors; everything was fresh, bright, and sparkling; birds twittered and called; it was a joyous morning.

We carried our luncheon in a splint basket

made by the Indians. Cousin Sally had bought it last fall, when an Indian family camped out in the woods below her house. Kitty showed me the path that led up to their camping-ground, and promised to take me in there some day.

"I wish you could be out here when they come," she said. "There's the man and his squaw, and a girl about my age, and a little pappoose, the cunningest little thing that ever you saw. Grandma made her a gingerbread boy, and she crowed and laughed and stuck it in her mouth, just like any baby."

Then she and Rosalie told me how the Indians lived up there in the woods, in a house made of spruce-boughs, with a bed of fir inside it; how they cooked everything in one kettle, slung over a fire out of doors, and used a pointed stick to take out their potatoes and other things; how they cut down trees (of course it was the man that cut the trees down), pounded the wood into strips, colored some of the strips, and wove baskets.

"I've seen Indians," I said. "It was when we lived in Eastport. Grandpa was there once and took me to see them. They had kettles hung over fires out of doors, just like your Indians, but they lived in tents, and had wagons all

around. There was a girl as big as you, Kitty—oh, she was so handsome! She was the handsomest girl that ever I saw in all the days of my life. Kitty, I think I should like to be a gypsy or an Indian—a handsome one—just for a little while."

"I suppose you think it would be romantic," said Kitty, sarcastically, "but I guess you'd find out. My, I wouldn't be an Indian for anything! They're the dirtiest creatures!"

"But I could be a clean Indian," I argued.

"Well, I don't want to be an Indian, or anything else but Katherine Doris Reed," said she. "You'd better look out how you wish that, or some of those fairies you talk so much about will be putting you under a spell, and some morning you'll wake up and find yourself black or brown, and then you'll wish on the other side of your mouth."

"If I could change back to myself before very long, I should like the experience of it," I returned. "I should like to look at myself in the looking-glass, and say, 'Can this be I?' And I should like to go to school and see how astonished the teacher and the girls would be. But, Kitty, I think the kind of person I should like

best to be is a Highlander with bagpipes, or else an Arab with a fiery steed, or a Spanish maiden with glorious great dark eyes."

Kitty laughed. "I'm satisfied to be myself," she said. "All I want is to live in the city, where I could have a good time."

"So do I," Rosalie said, like a little echo; "I don't want to be anything but Rosalie Reed, but I want to have a good time."

"So do I," I said, eagerly. "I wish I had a magic cap to make me invisible. Oh, I would have such fun! At school, when I didn't know the question, I would put on my cap and disappear, and, if I knew any other girl's question, I would suddenly pop up in front of her and answer instead. At church, I would sit on the edge of the gallery with my feet hanging over, and walk on it way 'round to the organ; and I would go down into the pulpit and sit with the minister; and I would walk up and down the aisles, looking at the people's faces, and when I came to nice-looking people I would stop and look all I wanted to. I would go into folks' houses and read all their books, and see all their pretty things. I would climb up into carriages and ride. I would go on the cars and boats, and travel all over the world. And nobody would know I was there.

"I don't know, though," I continued, doubtfully; "if I didn't have Fortunatus's purse, too, it would be an awful temptatious kind of life, for I should want to go into the stores and take the good things."

"There, you see," said Kitty, in her high-moral way. "If you could have your wishes you'd end by being hung for a witch."

"They don't hang people for witches nowadays," I reminded her.

"Well, they would you," she rejoined; "a girl that was white one day, and black or red or goodness knows what color the next day, and that cut up in church, and fooled the teacher, and stole things. The trouble with you, Lucy, is that your ideas are too flighty. There's lots of fun you might have without a magic cap, that you never think of having. Molly says that Dick is all funny-bone; I think you must be all wish-bone.

"When I was your age," she went on, "I used to have plenty of fun; now, of course, my ideas are different."

"What are your ideas, Kitty?" I asked.

"I should like to live in Portland, and have pretty clothes and lots of jewelry, and go to all the shows and dances, and have all the ice-cream and

chocolate-drops I wanted, and take a trip to Boston whenever I felt like it."

"Here's the school," Rosalie said, interrupting us.

The school-house was a brick building. I recognized it as the one that I had seen when I rode out with Mr. Crowe. In the yard in front of it the children were gathering, a few at a time. Pretty soon the teacher came—a girl not much, if any, older than her oldest pupils. Then we went inside and school began.

I expected to sit with Kitty, but the teacher said: "I think that that little girl had better come with Rosalie;" so I went down in front, and was seated among the A, B, C's. All the boys there were A, B, C's, but the girls were of various ages, and some of them wore long dresses, and "pugged" their hair.

First, the teacher read out of the Bible, and then everybody said the Lord's Prayer and sang a song, exactly the way we did at North School; but the next proceeding was different. The teacher gave out examples in fractions to the big girls, and in long division to the middle-sized girls; and then she called the little ones out on the floor to read: "Here—is—a—pig. The—pig—is—not—big. The—pig—has—a—curl—

in—its—tail." (Or something similar to that.) They didn't mix things so at North School.

"Little girl," she said to me, "can you read?"

Oh, how mortified I was! To be asked if I could read, at my age! I felt hot all over.

"I'm eight years old!" I said, reproachfully.

"Well, can you read?" she repeated. And then Kitty came to the rescue.

There was one good thing about Kitty—no matter how much she might snub you herself, she always would stand up for you if anybody else did not seem to appreciate you as much as she thought they ought. She raised her hand and shook it vigorously.

"What is it, Kitty?" asked the teacher.

"Why, Miss Mayberry, she can read elegant!" cried my champion. "You've no idea how well she can read; she can read anything; she reads 'most all the time. Why, she knows hundreds of pieces all by heart, and can say them without a single mistake. Can't you, Lucy?"

(I did not know hundreds of pieces; I knew only about—I don't remember exactly, but it was far from a hundred. To be accurate, it must have been less than fifty. In fact, I am not sure that it was as many as twenty-five.)

"Oh, Miss Mayberry," exclaimed one of the

big girls, "let's hear her say some of them, will you?"

Miss Mayberry looked dubious; she felt that she ought not to waste lesson-time, yet she was curious to hear me. "You wouldn't have time to explain those examples," she said, hesitating.

"We'll be as quick as chain-lightning, to make up for it," the girl promised.

"What pieces do you know?" Miss Mayberry asked me.

"I know some in 'Standard Speaker,' and some in 'Chimes for Childhood,'" I answered, shyly.

"'Standard Speaker'?" she said, questioningly.

"Yes, 'm. That's my grandpa's book. 'Chimes for Childhood' is my book. I had it Christmas."

"Will you say some of them for us?" she asked. And I said: "Yes, 'm."

"If you will do your best till recess time," she told the girls, "and will give up recess, we will have her recite some of her pieces."

"Yes, 'm," they all agreed.

At recess time she said to me: "Now, little girl, you may stand on my chair, if you want to." But I shrank back. "I'd rather stand right here," I returned.

I did my best, too. Very likely I did not pronounce all the words correctly, but I called them something—I did not trip. First I gave them "Horatius at the Bridge"; then "Come hither, Evan Cameron"—"On Linden when the sun was low"—"The boy stood on the burning deck"—"Why is the Forum crowded? What means this stir in Rome?"—"Old Ironsides"—"Pibroch of Donnel Dhu"—"Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, 'This is my own, my native land'?"—"Io, they come, they come!"—"Abou Ben Adhem"—"I know the organ is a living thing; it speaks on Sunday, when the people sing"—and "'Twas the night before Christmas." By that time I was all worn out.

"Now, there's one more that I want you to hear," said Kitty. "It's the cutest thing that ever was. Lucy, say 'Baby's Letter to Uncle.'"

It begins this way:

"Dear old uncle,
I dot oor letter.
My dear mama,
Se dittin' better."

And it goes on in that silly style. But I thought it very cunning, and must have been

tired indeed when I could not say it. Everyone seemed to find it amusing, Miss Mayberry as much as any of the girls.

But suddenly she looked at the clock, and cried: "My gracious, girls, it's dinner-time!"

While school was breaking up for the noon intermission she asked Kitty some questions about me, and Kitty talked of me in a surprisingly rose-colored way. According to her, I was "an awful smart young one."

"You wouldn't think so, to look at her," she said, apologetically; "but, you see, Miss Mayberry, since she has been out here she has got all bitten by mosquitoes and bees, and tanned, and hit by a ball, and everything, so she doesn't look natural."

I was astonished to hear that Kitty thought me so interesting. Indeed, I was astonished to hear that I was so interesting. At first it seemed as if she were talking about somebody else, and I wondered who it could be; then, when I realized that she meant me, I felt dismayed, and as if I ought to correct some of the things she said; then I began to think that they must be true, strange as it seemed; and then I felt perfectly puffed up.

The big girls stood around and listened, and

looked at me, saying: "My!"—"You don't say!"—etc. The A, B, C's stared at me in a respectful way. I kept getting puffier and puffier, although if anyone had asked me what I felt so vain about I could not have told. You see, I had never been bragged about before, and it was a delightful experience.

Miss Mayberry went away to her boarding-place to get her dinner; those of the scholars who lived at the Corner went home to their dinners; and the rest of us went somewhere—I cannot exactly locate the spot in my mind, but I remember that we sat under a great tree, and laid our napkins all together like a table-cloth, and that every big girl there had brought a pickle and every little girl had a slice of bread spread with strawberry jam.

While we were eating dinner the big girls talked about "the raspberrying," and I listened with all my ears.

"Kitty," said one of the girls, "do your mother and grandmother know that old lady Lord is down from Windham?"

"No," said Kitty; "when did she come?"

"Yesterday," answered the girl; "and she is going to stay a week. She's at Luce Pride's now, and she's going to visit 'round, a day in each

place. Of course she'll be up to your house. And say, what do you think?—she's going to the raspberrying."

This seemed to surprise everyone. "For pity's sake!" they said; "why, she's awful old! —she's seventy, if she's a day!" But they agreed that she was a remarkable old lady. They told various anecdotes about her spryness and smartness, and concluded with the opinion, that even if she only half tried she could beat the whole crowd at raspberrying.

Another girl said that the Paine boys were going, and that they had two new songs to sing. "My!" said she. "You wait till you hear them! They'll make you fairly double up, they're so funny."

Some of the girls did not expect to get there before noon, because they felt that they must not stay out of school; but others did not "care for all the schools in creation, when there was a raspberrying on the docket." Kitty was one of these. Miss Mayberry had agreed to have half-holiday, and she and the school were going together, in time for lunch.

After dinner the big girls talked of other matters, less interesting to me, so I went to play with the children. We played "catch" and

"hide-and-go-seek" until clouds came up and sprinkled a little rain on us, and then we ran to the school-house.

That afternoon was another delightful experience. Miss Mayberry told me that I might sit with Kitty, and the big girls treated me splendidly. They gave me some of their gum, and as they had among them several different kinds—white "kerosene" gum, pink "sugar" gum, spruce (the kind that you buy in the stores, done up in tissue-paper), and real spruce (the kind that you get in the woods)—I had quite a variegated mouthful. And they cut paper dolls for me, behind their books, which they piled in ramparts on their desks in front of them. At the end of the afternoon I had eleven paper dolls. All of them wore red or white tissue-paper dresses, because those were the only colors sold in the Pride's Corner store; but the dressing was done with an eye to variety, some being white, some red, some red trimmed with white, and some white trimmed with red. I was charmed with them.

I think that Miss Mayberry must have suspected what was going on behind the books, although she did not seem to observe it; for when school was done, and girls were calling out:

"Be sure you come again, Lucy," and I was answering: "Oh, yes, I'm coming all the time," she spoke up, quickly—yet, with evident regard for my feelings, spelling as she went along: "Kitty, don't b-r-i-n-g that c-h-i-l-d with you again; s-h-e interferes with our w-o-r-k."

Imagine how I felt then! It took all the wind right out of my sails.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN WHICH I REMEMBER THE SASSAFRAS LOZENGES

RAIN clouds were moving over the sky when we started for home, but we did not heed them much. It had showered at intervals all the afternoon, and grass and ground were wet, but we did not mind that either. We took our time, going aside into the woods every little while to pick bunchberries, hunt for fairy cups on lichen-covered stumps, listen for squirrels, or one thing or another, until all at once I noticed that it was growing dark.

"It's a thunder-shower!" Kitty cried. "Oh, sha'n't we get a ducking!"

Now I was not exactly afraid of thunder and lightning when I was a little girl; indeed, if I was safe under cover I rather enjoyed the peals and flashes and the sweeping rain; but I did not like the idea of being out where they could get

at me. So at that moment home seemed a very long distance away.

Far ahead, the woods on either side of the road looked nearer together, and through the narrow gateway of sky that they left open a fearful blackness was coming toward us. The air had died down; the leaves did not move a bit; it was as if the Earth had stopped breathing.

There was something frightening about it all; and when the next instant the wind came in one great gust, whirling the dust up in clouds, thrashing the trees, and shrieking like a host of demons; when lightning darted everywhere, thunder crash followed thunder crash, and a flurry of rattling hailstones beat down on us—I felt as if this were the end of the world, and was so terrified that I hardly had sense enough to run.

We did run, though. People usually do retain their running sense, even after their other senses have deserted them. Kitty said: "Scoot, now!" and we obeyed her.

Fleet-footed Kitty did not desert us little ones, so we kept together. The hail turned to rain and fell in torrents. We ran through mud-puddles, pools, rivers; past the wood, the blueberry pasture and Sam Cobb's biscuit, till we were in sight of the house. Then, alas! I almost dropped

some of my precious paper dolls, and in stopping to rescue them and carefully replace them in the book that I carried, I was left behind. Fright took entire possession of me; I felt as if the props of the world had given way and everything were tumbling to chaos.

How I got over the remainder of the road I do not know, but I did reach home with a whole skin, though it was a pretty wet one. I was so exhausted and wrought up and relieved when I had shot in through the barn door, that I fell in a heap on my book of paper dolls, and cried and cried and cried, and could not stop crying.

Even after Aunt Eunice had rubbed me, changed my clothes, and given me ginger-tea, I kept crying by fits and starts, although not so violently. But she said that I would stop by and by, and so I did. For, when at length we were all dryly clothed, and went to the door to watch the shower clear away, I also brightened—enough to be interested in a rainbow that came with the sunburst.

That was a glorious rainbow. It has always seemed to me that it had more colors in it than any other rainbow I ever saw, but of course it couldn't have had, because all rainbows have the same colors; still, it must have been very vivid,

for I can see it now. One end of it dropped over beyond the woods at the eastward—in the field where we were going raspberrying, Kitty thought.

"I wonder what the rainbow is," I said.

"The rainbow is nothing but air," said Kitty. "If we were over in the raspberry-field, and should put our hands through it, it wouldn't feel any different from any other air."

"Then what makes it look different?" I asked.

"I learned that in Sunday-school," said Kitty. "God made it look so on purpose, to remind people of the flood, and that if they don't look out, there'll be another one.

"Or else, it's to remind them that there never'll be another one—no matter how bad they are, there never'll be another one; I don't remember which," she added.

"My grandpa says it's the Bow of Promise, to keep people's courage up," I said.

"I guess that is it," said Kitty; "I knew it was to put folks in mind of one or the other."

"I like to think other things about it," said I.

"What things?" she asked.

"Oh, about the pot of gold at the end of it, and about its being a bridge, and things like that."

"You ought not to," she said, reprovingly; "it's wicked. It's well enough for you to think such things about common things, but anything that it tells about in the Bible it's wicked for you to think such things about."

After supper, when the ground was dry enough, Kitty and Rosalie went for the cow; but Cousin Sally told me to "stay right around here." And she added: "Remember, you have on your best shoes. If you spoil those you will have to go barefoot."

So I went out to the barn, to play by myself.

Things began to go wrong with me. First, while I was swinging standy-up I fell and hurt my knee. Then Cousin Sally found the garden-fork and the hatchet, covered with rust, in the grass by our wrecked camp, and as I was the only one of the guilty party within scolding distance I had to be scapegoat. Then I followed a silvery moth, and before I realized where I was straying I had left a footprint in Cousin Sally's geranium-bed, as telltale as Man Friday's in the sea-shore sand, and my best shoes were coated with mud.

Cousin Sally scolded me for that too.

Then I began to cough; and when she said that she had expected nothing less than that I would get cold, with such a wetting this after-

noon, but that she shouldn't think I would begin to cough so soon, and I told her about wetting my feet on Saturday, she scolded me for not telling her before. But she gave me some medicine, even while she scolded.

I felt tired and ill, but did not know what really was the matter; I felt little and lost, and the world looked very strange and dreary. I sat down on the piazza-steps, leaned my head against the railing, and looked listlessly into the gathering dusk. I longed to be at home with my mother. The only thing that made this place bearable for even one night more was the thought that Philip would soon be here; Philip was so comforting when you had that lonesome feeling.

Kitty and Rosalie came through the yard with Fannie. "What are you staying out there in the dark for?" Kitty called, cheerily.

"I'm waiting for Philip to come," I answered.

"He isn't coming," she returned. "None of them are coming to-night. Didn't you know that? Molly is going to stay with Luce Pride, at the Corner. Why, they were talking about it. They're going to a party."

Philip not coming home! This was the last straw. No, not the last, for although it weighed upon my spirits more than words can say, I did

not break down yet awhile. But I did feel like crying.

I wished that I were at home with my mother. At this time I should be getting ready for bed—bidding good-night, perhaps, before going up to my attic chamber. I could see our sitting-room, with grandma in her rocking-chair by the window, knitting, nodding, catching herself at it, straightening up, and knitting on with increased diligence and dignity; grandpa reading or writing at the secretary, springing up now and then to walk the floor and repeat in a fervid, half-aloud way, something that struck him as true and telling, or filling his pen in the inkstand and absent-mindedly shaking the ink all over the floor; mother reaching up to the high mantel-piece for a match, and lighting the small lamp, to go with Bobby and me. How long it had been since I came away from them! I recalled how everything looked that morning. And then in a flash came a recollection of the sassafras lozenges that grandpa had put into my hand at parting.

The sassafras lozenges! What became of them? I had not thought of them from that moment to this! But, oh, how good they would have tasted! And they were lost forever! I put my head down on the step above me and burst into tears.

"Why, Lucy, Lucy, dear!" cried Kitty, who was coming back from the barn. "What's the matter?" And she sat down beside me and put her arm around me.

"Oh, Kitty," I sobbed, lifting my head, "I had—a roll—of sassafras lozenges."

"When? Where did you get them?" she asked, in surprise.

"Grandpa—gave—them to me—when I—came away," I sobbed. "They must have—fell down—in the wagon—Mr. Crowe's wagon—I've—never thought of them—from—that day—to this."

Kitty sat back and laughed. "Oh, Lucy, Lucy! Ha, ha, ha, ha!" she cried. Then, stopping short, she put her arm around me again. "Poor child," she said, kindly, "you are tired as you can be. Come in and go to bed."

"Grandma," she said, as we went into the kitchen, "see Lucy; she is tired as she can be, and she's crying."

"Why, my dear!" said Aunt Eunice, leaving her work in the pantry, and wiping her hands on her apron as she came quickly to me.

"I found her sitting on the steps, crying," said Kitty.

"Sitting on the steps?" Aunt Eunice re-

peated. "I thought that she and Rosalie were out in the barn. I was going to call them in a minute."

"Rosalie went with me," said Kitty.

"You haven't been crying all that time, have you?" asked Aunt Eunice, drawing me to her and beginning to unfasten my dress.

"No," I answered, still sobbing, "I didn't cry—till now—but things—kept piling up—and I—I couldn't hold in any longer."

Aunt Eunice gave me some more medicine, and put me to bed. I went to sleep at once—and don't you think I needed it?

CHAPTER XIX

IN WHICH WE GO UPON THE TRAIL

WHEN morning came I was so stiff and achy-all-over, that, although my first thought was, "The day of the raspberrying has come at last," I did not feel a bit excited. But after a while, when we had dressed and gone downstairs, when my joints had limbered, and a cup of warm milk and water had soothed my sore throat, I suddenly woke up to the joyful prospect.

Cousin Sally and Kitty were getting ready for the picnic. It was one of those mornings when you cannot be sure whether the day will turn out showery or sunny, but Cousin Sally said, laughing, that she should go unless it rained pitchforks and darning-needles. She was in very lively humor, and joked a good deal as she packed the muffins, boiled eggs, hot gingerbread, and flaky pie that Aunt Eunice had been prepar-

ing for her. Cousin Sally had a gay disposition, and (as Molly said) she found life poky in the country; every picnic, circle, dance, or quilting-bee was a tonic to her.

She wrapped a piece of red flannel wet with camphor around my throat, and she told us to be good girls. "Now don't you get into any mischief to-day," she said, and we answered: "No, 'm;" but something in the way she spoke puzzled me for a moment, though I did not dream of her not meaning to take us with her.

We had put on clean dresses that morning, and we hung our hats on the door-knob, so as to have them handy. This was Rosalie's idea. She had another idea also—she brought me the comb and asked me to comb the snarls out of her hair. When I expressed surprise she said: "Grandma and mother are busy, and they won't let us go unless my hair is combed."

A vague dread began to shadow my light-heartedness; but I did not say anything—only combed and pulled at that tangle of curls with hurried perseverance. Poor Rosalie made no murmur; she held her head as stiff as a hero's upper lip, and when I had finished and tied her ribbon in a bow on top she actually thanked me.

Then we put on our hats, and sat waiting.

Prince came and lay down at our feet. We waited until Charlie and the buggy were brought out and the lunch stowed away under the seat; then we took our stand by the wheel, and waited there till Cousin Sally and Kitty came to get in; and then we began to climb up ahead of them.

"Why," Cousin Sally exclaimed, in surprise, "what are you doing? You are not going. I'm not going to take you two children."

My heart felt as if a cold, hard snowball had hit it. I backed down to the ground. Rosalie kept on, and seated herself.

"Get down this instant," said her mother; "if you don't I shall take you down."

Rosalie did not stir; so her mother lifted her out, struggling and kicking.

"I can't take you," Cousin Sally said, in an arguing way. "I didn't know that you had any idea of going. You are too little to go; there won't be any such children there."

"Yes, mother, there will be," said Kitty; "quite a number of the little ones are going with Miss Mayberry."

"Well, I can't help it if they are," said Cousin Sally. "Lucy isn't fit to go. She coughed all night, and was so feverish that I was worried to death about her. She would be sure to get more

cold, and be down sick. And just look at her. No, she isn't in a fit condition to go anywhere. And besides, if we expect to get any berries to speak of, we can't be bothered with two children."

"They're awful disappointed," said Kitty.

"I can't help it," replied Cousin Sally. "If Lucy should take more cold, and be sick, her mother would never forgive me.

"I'm sorry, children," she went on, to us, "but you will have to stay at home. You shall each have a saucerful of berries for supper, and when we come by the store I'll stop and get you some candy."

Candy! The idea! What was candy? I sat down on the doorstep, in speechless, hopeless, helpless misery. Rosalie flung herself, face down, on the grass, and kicked and shrieked and screamed.

Cousin Sally was distressed. "You shall go next time," she promised.

Rosalie screamed on.

"I will take you when we go after blackberries," said her mother, bending over her and trying to lift her. "Why can't you be a good little girl, like Lucy, and not make a fuss?"

But Rosalie would not be pacified.

Aunt Eunice called from the door: "Go right

along, Sally. It will stop as soon as you are out of sight; it always does."

So Cousin Sally went.

"I'll tell you all about it, and I'll bring you something good," Kitty cried back, but I did not heed her, nor did I watch the buggy depart; I sat there like a stone image, until the sound of wheels died away and Rosalie ceased to scream. Tired out with her violence, she sat down beside me. "It's meaner than mean," she said. I did not reply. Prince licked her face and talked consoling dog-talk to her.

Presently she spoke again:

"I wonder what kind of candy mother will bring us."

"I don't want candy," I said. "I want to go to the raspberrying. I never went to a raspberrying in all the days of my life. I never shall go to one again. I want to go to the raspberrying."

While we sat there several teams went by—a wagon laden with baskets and singing folk, a spruce buggy with a young man and a girl, and a dingy one with a woman and a boy. These last stopped, and hailed Rosalie, inquiring if her mother had gone, and then drove rapidly on again.

By and by along came Mrs. Baker and her two

little girls. They greeted us, and were surprised because we were not going. "I don't know as I should have taken Louie and Grace if I hadn't thought your mother was going to take you," said Mrs. Baker, as she drove on.

This fired our resentment afresh. "But it won't do any good to scream now," said Rosalie, in a philosophical tone.

"No," said I, "it won't do any good to scream; it didn't before; it's just wasting breath. If I thought it would do any good, I'd scream the top of the world off."

"There won't be any more teams go by here, but there will be a lot going on the other road," said Rosalie.

"A whole procession of them," I said, mournfully. "And they will go through the woods, along a wide wood road, under the pines."

"They will laugh and sing and eat pea-nuts," said Rosalie. "I went once. I think it was years ago, or else it was last summer. We got a whole lot of raspberries, great big ones."

"As big as Aunt Eunice's thimble," said I. "And the ground is red with them; if you should set your foot down on them it would look as if you had stepped in blood. The people will hold their pails and baskets under and shake them in.

And old lady Lord will be there, and she will shake faster than anybody else."

"I wonder if that lady will take the honeycomb for us," said Rosalie.

"Of course she will," I replied. "And there will be the three-cornered, green-apple turnovers, ruffled all 'round the edges. And at lunch time they will go to that beautiful place under the tree, and sit on the moss, and dip their mugs in the spring."

"I like to go to a picnic," said Rosalie. "I like to see the things spread out, and all sit around and hand them over. Only once an ant got on me, and bit me, and I hollered."

"The Paine boys will sing," I went on. "Once there was a man came into our school, and all the slides went up, and the teacher spoke to the four rooms, and said that he would sing us a funny song, and he sang it. It was about a man who laughed. And he laughed and laughed and doubled up and laughed. Oh, it was so funny! And we all laughed and laughed, too. The Paine boys will sing like that, and everybody will double up. Oh, Rosalie, Rosalie!"

"It's meaner than mean," said Rosalie, again; and she was almost crying.

I set my heel down hard. "Rosalie," said I, "it's diabolical!"

"Let's go," she suggested.

"We don't know the way," I said, doubtfully.

"I know the way," she replied. "Every time we drive by it I say, 'There's the way we went raspberrying.' It's a road through the woods."

"Does it go straight there?" I asked.

"I guess so," she answered.

I rose. "Let's go," I said. "When we are in the woods we can do the way Leatherstocking and the Indians did—follow the trail. We can follow the wheel-tracks. Come, Rosalie, let's go, and let's hurry."

She sprang up and took my hand, and we and Prince set forth on our adventures.

We did hurry, feeling that there was no time to be lost. When we had walked perhaps a quarter of a mile, a wagon came along behind us, and a pleasant, man's voice called out: "Hello! Going to school?"

Rosalie answered: "No, sir; we're going to the raspberrying."

"Going raspberrying? How far you going? Don't you want a lift?"

We gladly accepted. He jumped down and lifted us in. He even put Prince up in front of us. "I'll show you the place when we come to it," said Rosalie, as he took his seat again.

He was on his way from Windham to Portland. He had a little girl of our size at home and was going to buy her a blue silk parasol when he had sold his butter and eggs. Her name, he said, was Ruby Pearl. I told him that I thought it a perfectly lovely name, and that I had a parasol, a green satin one, with an ivory handle. This interested him; he made me describe my parasol, asking the price of it, which I could not tell him. He told us that Ruby Pearl had a white kitten and a wax doll, and that her grandma was "visiting down this way." Then we came to the wood road, and said good-by.

That was our first adventure. It made me feel blither and better-humored than I had been when we started forth.

The wood road was beautiful. It was broad, white, hard, and even as a floor. On the right side stood a tall, dim pine-grove with a level carpet of brown needles; on the left was an open growth of gayer trees, such as birches and young oaks and maples, intermixed with small firs and spruces. Among them grew brakes with slender stems and spreading tops, like fairy palm-trees, and delicate, pale green ferns, and glowing scarlet bunchberries.

Along the road ran wheel-tracks, and here,

beyond, and yet farther on were scattered pea-nut shells. "Rosalie," I said, as I kept seeing them, "let's play Indian."

"We can't stop," she replied.

"I don't mean tame Indians in a camp; I mean wild ones on the trail," I explained. "We must go softly and you must walk behind me (I'll be the Indian chief), and we must keep noticing things and making signs. We mustn't speak at all, only grunt once in a while and make signs."

"All right," said Rosalie; "but what shall we make signs about?"

"We must pretend that the wheel-tracks aren't there all the way, and every once in a while we must discover some, or a pea-nut shell, and we must point to them, and nod, and point ahead, and go on; and we must listen, and pretend we hear deer and bears and things; and we must peer into the woods after foes; and if we see a foe we must get behind a tree, and shoot a bow-arrow at him."

So we played Indian as we journeyed on. Even Prince entered into the spirit of the game. He would smell of the pea-nut shells and the hoof marks, looking up at us and wagging his tail, as much as to say: "We are right, this is the way

they went;" then he would prick up his ears suspiciously at some light sound, go silently off into the woods and come silently back again to continue the trail; and although he gave a subdued growl now and then, he did not bark. Prince was a very intelligent dog.

As for us, we were stealthily watchful; and when, by and by, we came to a bend of the road, we crept up cautiously, to make sure that no enemy was lurking there. If we had not done so I don't know whether I should have lived to tell you this story, for just around the curve we met a dangerous foe.

"Bow, wow, wow!
Here's a cow!"

cried Prince; and, sure enough, there she was, headed directly for us.

She was a large, fierce-looking, red cow—of that peculiar shade of red that goes with a fiery disposition. The instant she saw us she gave one terrible roar, and lashed her tail, and glared. Her eyes were like coals of fire, and she foamed at the mouth. Rosalie and Prince, who were used to cows and not afraid of them, were frightened at this one's savage aspect. We got behind a tree. We trembled, and clasped each other.

Prince held his tail between his legs, but he growled valiantly. The cow stood and glared.

We watched her, waiting to find out what she meant to do. I recalled a story of my mother's, of how once she saw a child tossed by a cow's horns high into the air. I almost felt myself going up.

The cow made up her mind to kill us, and came on the dead run. We shrieked, and she stopped a moment, lashing her tail and glaring, as before. Then she came galloping on again, and we turned and fled.

We ran as if our feet had wings, right into the pine-grove, and she dashed madly after us. Her hoofs fell in heavy, muffled thuds on the soft carpet of needles. Dry twigs snapped, and fallen wood crashed underfoot.

On, on we went. Rosalie stumbled over Prince, fell, sprang up and rushed along again. I caught my dress on a broken branch, tore it away, and raced after Rosalie. I could hear the cow panting behind me. I gasped for breath, and my blood seemed to sing in my ears. I grew dizzy, and went plunging, I knew not where.

When my wits came back to me, I found that we were in the underbrush, hedged about, like enchanted princesses, with bushes as stiff as steel

bars. We could not break or bend them; we were imprisoned. But the cow did not follow us, and that was one thing to be thankful for.

"Let's crawl underneath," Rosalie proposed.

We got down on our hands and knees and crawled. Prince did better than we, for the stems whipped our faces, and caught at Rosalie's hair. The ground was moist, covered with matted leaves, mossy in places, and suggestive of bugs. We came to a fallen tree coated with scratchy lichens; we came to a patch of running blackberry, full of prickles; we bumped our heads against a rock; we rolled into a hollow; and all these things happened over and over again.

"It's a long road that has no turn," says the proverb. Our "turn" came in a swamp. All at once we felt our hands sinking into wetness, and at the same time our heads poked out of the underbrush.

A black, miry cow-path lay before us. It was strung with pools of water along its length as far as we could see, and alder bushes walled it in. There was nothing to do but wade, and wade we did.

We waded and waded, through pool after pool and mire after mire, and at length came to a brook. There was a corduroy bridge over the

brook (at least, Kitty said afterward, from my description, that it must be a corduroy bridge), but we did not walk on it; we waded through the water, to wash the mud off our shoes.

Then we looked about us. "Rosalie," I said, in a grave tone, "we are lost."

"I know it," she responded, lightly; "and I'm hungry."

"I'm tired. I feel as if my feet would break off," I said. "What shall we do, Rosalie?"

"What can we do?" she asked.

"If we were wrecked on a desert island we could hoist a signal, and if we were lost on the plains we could build a bonfire; the proper way here is to climb a tree, but I don't see how we can," I said, helplessly.

"Let's follow the brook," said Rosalie. "I don't want to go the cow-path way any more—we might meet old Thunder-and-lightning again. See Prince drink, poor fellow. Let us drink, too, and wash our faces; I'm so hot I'm almost melted."

We lay on our stomachs, and putting our lips to the water sucked it in, a refreshing draught. Then we splashed our faces, dabbled our hands, and ducked our heads. Rosalie wrung the wet from her hair, and it curled up tight and crisp.

Our dresses were wet, but we were so warm that it did not matter to us how wet we were.

We decided to go up stream, because it looked prettier that way. The sides of the brook were fringed with ferns, and it flowed over sandy shallows, rippling brightly in the sun. The banks were so overgrown with bushes that we had to walk in the water a part of the way.

The brook took us back to the pine-grove, only to a different place from that where we had met our second adventure. In this place the trees stood closer together, and looked as high as church-spires; hardly any sky could be seen; scarcely any plants grew on the ground, which was all one bare, brown carpet; it was a gloomy, lonesome wood.

We were so tired that we had to sit down and rest. The day was, as I said once before, a day of uncertain temper, now smiling, now threatening to weep. When the sun shone out the world seemed full of hope and the zest of adventure; when he hid his face in a cloud handkerchief everything seemed dreary and sad. He hid his face now, and it looked as if night were settling down.

Suppose we should never find our way out, I thought with a shudder. I began to imagine that appalling fate. How black the darkness of

The banks were so overgrown with bushes that we had to walk in the water part of the way.

night must be here! I was afraid of utter darkness, even in my own bedroom at home, but here it would be unbearable. "Rosalie," I said, "s'pose we should have to stay here all night?"

"We sha'n't," she returned, cheerfully; "we shall go up the brook and find them."

"How still it is," I said. "Out there we heard birds, and grasshoppers, and things, but here you can't hear anything but crows. They're saying: 'Lost, lost, lost.'"

"It's cooler here than it was out there," she said, in a tone of comfort.

"Yes, it is," I agreed; "I feel all nice and shivery. But it's a melancholic place."

Rosalie laughed. Her laughter sounded eerie, and set the crows cawing harder than ever. Prince began to caper and bark, and she and he rolled over and over together on the pine floor till they were plastered with spills.

"It may be a magic wood," I said. "S'pose all these trees should move with us, and no matter how fast we went we should never get to the end?"

"Poh! I could run faster than a tree," said Rosalie.

"S'pose they all turned to giants and went stalking over us?"

"They couldn't," she returned; "trees can't turn to giants; trees always stay trees."

"S'pose this was an Indian wood?" I said, taking another tack; "an Indian wood, all full of Indians? S'pose a long file of Indians, all war-paint and feathers and scalps, should come stealing through the trees over there? S'pose they should war-whoop at us, and tomahawk us, and scalp us, and leave us for dead?"

"Poh! I shouldn't be scared," said Rosalie; but she did glance over her shoulder.

"S'pose it's a haunted wood?" I said, in a hushed voice. "S'pose when it gets dark white Shapes start up all at once, everywhere, and wind in and out among the trees, sighing mournfully?"

Rosalie got up. "I'm rested now," she said. Evidently she was determined not to be scared. I was not rested, but I also arose, and quickly, too; not for worlds would I have been left there alone, even one minute.

We followed the brook again, a mere thread of water, silently coming down through the pines, which gradually grew less sombre, and began to mingle with other kinds of trees. And here we had our third adventure.

CHAPTER XX

IN WHICH WE HAVE A "TIP-TOP" TIME

"'SH! What's that?" said Rosalie, stopping and grasping my arm.

"It's somebody crying," I said, as I listened.

Prince went ahead to find out, and after a doubtful, alarmed look at each other, we followed him.

The crying was not very loud, and was frightened merely in a forlorn sort of way, but now it rose to shrill screams of terror. "Don't! Don't! Go 'way! Go 'way!" shrieked a frantic voice, and with it mingled Prince's excited yelps and barks.

We hurried. What could be the matter? I must confess the thought of another cow made me hesitate, but those heart-rending shrieks spurred me on again. We hastily parted the

bushes upon a hapless sight. It was a little girl wedged in the crotch of a wild cherry tree.

The crotch was about four feet from the ground, and she hung by her waist, her legs dangling on one side, her head and arms struggling on the other. Prince was leaping up to express sympathy by licking her face, but she did not seem to be understanding his attentions. "Prince! Prince!" I cried; for I knew at once how she was feeling.

"Why, it's Louie Baker!" exclaimed Rosalie. "Here, sir! Down, Prince, down! He won't hurt you, Louie; he's only kissing you. Here, Prince, come here! Now you can get down, Louie; he won't bark at you again."

"I can't!" wailed Louie. "I'm stuck! I'm stuck fast!"

"We'll pull you down," said Rosalie, promptly. We each seized a foot and pulled with energy, but it did not start her. Indeed, she redoubled her screams, and begged us to let her alone. "It hurts! It hurts! Oh, don't! Oh, don't!" she cried.

"How did you get stuck?" Rosalie asked, as we stopped.

"I was 'fraid of the dog," said Louie, sobbing. "I jumped up on the stone and tried to climb,

and I slipped and fell. Oh, dear, oh, dear! What shall I do?"

Louie was a very slim little girl; she fitted in tight between the forking branches. We did not know what to do for her. It is remarkable how much easier it is to get up a tree than it is to come down again. I stood and studied the problem, and at length said:

"We must roll one of those stones up in front of her, and I will stand on it and boost, while you stand on the one behind and pull her down."

We rolled the stone up to the tree. Probably it was not a large stone, but it seemed heavy to us. Then I mounted it, and, holding on to the tree-trunk with both hands, put my head up against her chest and pushed with all my might. At the same time Rosalie jerked and tugged at poor Louie from behind.

For a while it did no good, but we kept at it. Louie cried all the time, and her tears dropped hot and fast upon my back. Finally we succeeded, and she slid to the ground. Then we all sat down to rest.

She was somewhat bruised, and her dress was torn, but no bones were broken. She cried for some time and we had hard work to comfort her. When she found that she was lost she called and

called, she said, but no one answered, and she walked and walked, but could not find her way back to the raspberry-field.

"Never mind," said Rosalie, cheerily; "that's where we're going; we'll take you with us."

We started again, still keeping along the brook-side.

"Listen!" said Rosalie, by and by; "what's that? I keep hearing it."

To the left of us, near and far, clear and faint, came hellos, whistles, and calls.

"It sounds like driving cows," said Louie.

"There must be a whole pack of them," I said, nervously.

"Let's hurry faster," said Rosalie; and we almost ran.

We heard women's voices and boys'. We did not understand what they were calling, and did not stop to find out, but hastened from that dangerous neighborhood. The underbrush kept growing thinner, until it ceased altogether, and we came to a pleasant, open grove, full of dancing sun and shadow. Here the brook ended, or rather began, in a spring, which was set in fern and jewel-weed and overspread by a splendid oak-tree. Beyond and beneath the oak, on level, mossy ground, was laid a large table-cloth covered

with good things; and on guard by it, her back against the bole of the tree, sat a little old lady with an anxious look on her good-natured face. I knew at once that it must be old lady Lord.

"Mercy me!" she cried, springing up, and staring at us. "What a start you give me! Whose young ones be you?" And then, as her gaze fell on Louie, she exclaimed: "Well, I give up, if it ain't the little Baker girl! Why, Sissy, dear, where you been? The whole parcel of folks is out hunting for ye."

"I got lost," Louie answered, "and Rosalie and Lucy found me."

"We were coming to the raspberrying," Rosalie explained. "Mother wouldn't take us, so we thought we'd come ourselves."

"Who is your mother?" asked old lady Lord.

"Mrs. Reed," Rosalie answered.

"You don't say!" ejaculated old lady Lord. She gazed at us, with a twinkle in her eye and a pucker on her lips. "Come on your own hook, did ye? Well, you be spunky," she said at length. "Ain't you all tuckered out?"

"I'm hungry," said Rosalie.

"Of course you be," said old lady Lord, "and you shall set right down and eat. Never mind if the folks ain't here; they'll be along soon."

She came to us, patted us kindly, and led us up to the feast. "You're damp," she said; "you'd best set on the sunny side and get dry.

"But first," she added, "we'll give one or two calls, all together; and then you fall to and fill up."

We all—old lady Lord, Louie, Rosalie, and I—lifted our voices in several high, quavering calls. "Come back! Come ba—ck!" we cried. Then we sat down, and I took stock of the good things before us, casting about for the one delicacy that I had set my heart on, the three-cornered green-apple turnovers, ruffled all 'round the edges.

There were pickles and cheese and bologna sausage and green cucumbers and boiled eggs; there were ham sandwiches and slices of mutton and corned beef; there were dough-nuts and cup custards, and lemon pie frosted on top, and buns with plums in them, and red jelly tarts; there were sponge cake and marbled cake and ribbon cake and fruit cake and yellow cake and frosted cake; there were cookies and jumbles and gingerbread; there were blueberry turnovers and raspberry turnovers and apple turnovers, none of which had ruffled edges, but were plain, ordinary turnovers, cut after the usual pattern, with commonplace thumb-marks around the rims.

"Why don't you take holt?" old lady Lord asked me, as I sat looking, searchingly and in evident disappointment. "Have a sandwich, dear."

I shook my head.

"Then a bun. Why, you must be hungry. Or a roll. Don't you like rolls? Here's a rusk. Do eat, child. Have a dough-nut, do."

I shook my head. I had made up my mind to have ruffled turnovers, and if I could not have them, I did not care for anything at all.

She looked at me in amazement. "Well, if you ain't the beatum!" she said. "For pity's sake, what *do* you want?"

I told her that Kate Jones's mother was going to bring green-apple turnovers, made with three corners, and ruffles all 'round the edges, and that I wanted one of those.

She laughed. "It's a good thing to know what you want," said she, "and it's another thing to get it. I ain't seen any of them sing'lar turnovers. They may be in some basket that's been forgot. I'll go look. I guess that Jones girl was jokin', but if there's any such turnovers as that around here I'd like a sight of 'em myself."

Accordingly she went away to the teams to hunt for the possible basket. The teams were

along the edges of the field, where the horses could browse on the bushes. She did not know which was Mrs. Jones's team, so she began at the first one and hunted all down the line. At length she discovered a tin pail stowed away under a seat, and opened it.

"My stars!" she cried. She brought it forward, and lifted out, one after another, three dozen of the most delicious-looking turnovers that ever I set eyes on in all the days of my life, before or since. They were small and all of a size; they were cut three-cornered, and were plump, flaky, and golden brown; and the edges were fluted into crisp ruffles, a quarter of an inch deep, all goldeny browny and shiny and perfectly nibblifferous. It makes my mouth water yet, merely to remember them.

They were packed with soft brown paper between, to keep them from breaking. Old lady Lord unwrapped them and smilingly laid them before us.

We each took one.

"That's right," she said to me; "and now you've got suited, keep at it. You've certainly got good taste; them's the puttiest things in the way of pie I ever see. Mis' Jones deserves a meddle."

We needed no urging; we did keep at it. It makes me ashamed to think that we were so selfish, but it is a sober fact—one after another, those three dozen turnovers disappeared. They were so appetizing, and we were so hungry; but it did not once occur to us that they had not been made solely for us. We did not even offer any to old lady Lord. But all the while she chuckled as at some great joke. And far in the distance we could hear the calls and halloos of the people who were hunting for Louie.

Old lady Lord kept laughing, till I said to myself, "She's the laughingest old lady I ever saw."

But by and by she began to look anxious again.

"I declare," she said, "I thought some of 'em would be back before now. It's too bad: there's Mis' Baker almost distracted; and everybody is goin' without their victuals, and wastin' time, and gettin' all wore out. I guess we'd best give another call, children."

We called again, but had no response.

"I don't believe it's any use to say 'come back,'" said I; "they'll think that it's somebody calling for Louie. We ought to holler something different, so that they'll take notice of it."

"Sure enough," said old lady Lord; "but what shall we holler?"

"I'll holler 'fire,'" I said, "and Louie can holler 'thieves,' and Rosalie can holler 'murder.' You needn't at all; we'll do it for you."

"Well, so do; I guess that'll fetch 'em," said old lady Lord. And she laughed again.

So we screamed those three words, over and over. We said them in all sorts of ways. First I would call, "Fire!" and then Louie would sing out, "Thieves!" and Rosalie, "Murder!" Then I would shout, "Fire, fire, fire!" and the other two would come in with, "Thieves, thieves, thieves!" "Murder, murder, murder!" Then we would all call together. It was great fun.

Before long the people came running back. They made an ado over Louie. She had to tell her story a dozen times or more. Some of the women and girls kissed her and called her, "Poor dear child!" But her mother scolded and almost cried.

Some young men took up our call, and their voices soon brought back the rest of the searchers. When Cousin Sally saw us, her face, which was flushed with heat and hurry, turned pale with astonishment, and for a moment she could not speak. Then she said: "Where did you come from, pray?"

We hung our heads. It suddenly seemed to

us that we had done wrong to come against her wishes. We felt foolish. Also, I suddenly felt conscious of our disreputable appearance: of our limp, soiled dresses, our muddy shoes and stockings, Rosalie's tangled hair, full of pine spills and bits of twig, my swollen face and red flannel throat, our scratched, mosquito-bitten hands; and I should have liked to vanish.

"What business had you to follow me?" said Cousin Sally.

"Now, Sally Reed," cried old lady Lord, "don't you find a mite of fault with them poor lambs. Three mortal hours have they been a-roamin' these woods, and it's a mercy they're here at all."

We plucked up heart at once.

"We came near being killed by a cow," said Rosalie, bidding for everybody else's sympathy.

But everybody else seemed to find this information amusing. The women and girls laughed and the young men haw-hawed for some seconds. I did not see what there was to laugh at; neither did Rosalie. "We did," she maintained with spirit; "we did come near getting killed by a cow. Didn't we, Lucy?"

"Yes, we did," I answered, emphatically.

They laughed again; but one woman spoke

up and said: "I don't know as there's anything to laugh at, after all. I'm scared to death of a cow."

"So be I," somebody else confessed.

"I always run when I see one," another woman admitted.

And would you believe it?—more than half the women there were afraid of cows. Even those who did not mind their own were "skittish" of strangers. Some of them went so far as to tie their own cows' legs when they milked.

"This was an awful big cow," said Rosalie, determined to impress them. "She was three times as big as our Fannie. Wasn't she, Lucy?"

"Yes," I responded. "And she was fiery red. She came down like the Assyrian. Once I thought sure she had me, but I put all my mind into my legs, and the first thing I knew I was safe in the bushes."

They had sat down to lunch by this time. Miss Mayberry had come, with those of her pupils who were good enough to go to school. She sat with the big girls, the young men and boys, at one end of the table-cloth. Kitty was there, and Mealy What's-her-name. A girl of about Molly's age, with curly hair and laughing eyes, nodded to Rosalie, and Rosalie said:

"There, Lucy, that's Emma Ellen." The boy who rode on the hay was there, too, and so were all the big girls whom I had seen at Sunday-school. The smaller children were scattered about among the women. I was between old lady Lord and Sarah Googins, or "that lady," as Rosalie and I called her. Louie and Rosalie were between Cousin Sally and Mrs. Baker. I saw Mrs. Low, also, a little way down the line.

The good things were passed to us, but we kept declining. At first this was not noticed particularly. For we were busy telling our adventures, and could not be expected to talk and eat both at the same time. They said that it was the red flannel on my throat that excited the cow, and somebody asked how I got my cold. Then Cousin Sally, who, I could see, was a little ashamed of me, took occasion to give the various reasons for my sorry condition. I was a delicate child, she said, and everything took right hold of me. Whereupon somebody remarked that bees usually did take right hold of anybody, delicate or not. And at that they laughed and haw-hawed again.

Then "that lady" told her version of the bee-bite story. She said that I was "real spunky," and "didn't make much fuss, considering." But

at this, the boy who rode on the hay exclaimed: "Oh, Mis' Googins! Why, she yelled like sixty!" And he began to sing his hateful song about the busy bee's making little girls holler.

While he had his mouth open on the word "holler," a young man opposite him threw a pickle into it. This pleased me, for I detested that boy. Besides, the pickle went straight as a dart, and I admired dexterity. I observed the young man with interest. He seemed to be the leader of the festive young folk. I observed that he and another young man kept passing things to Miss Mayberry, and that she laughed at everything they said. His name was Jo. Could he be Jo Paine, I wondered?

But my attention was divided, for the elders were talking about me. They were advising Cousin Sally as to what she had better do with me when she got me home. One said to soak my feet in mustard water and give me salts and senna; another said that a bath with cayenne in the water would be better than mustard; another said that a good sweat was the best thing in the world. They recommended aconite and belladonna, thoroughwort tea, horehound syrup, Ayer's cherry pectoral, boiled molasses with butter and vinegar in it, nitre, flaxseed and lemon,

and licorice. One said that I ought to be packed in cold water; another thought hot water preferable to cold; another said that lard was better than either; and another said to use cod liver oil outside and in. And Cousin Sally, though she did not exactly promise to do all these things to me, seemed disposed to; for she kept agreeing with everyone—saying, "Why, that would be good," or, "There! why didn't I think of that before?" so that I began to feel alarmed.

Suddenly I heard one of the girls say: "Come, boys, it's time to sing."

The young man who threw the pickle stood up and bowed. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I'm going to give you a surprise."

He went to one of the wagons, and fetched a case with a green flannel cover, from which he took a banjo. This seemed to be a great surprise, and everybody exclaimed and questioned about it. They all had to handle it, too, and pick at the strings. I did not go to look at it; I was too bashful.

"I wondered what that was," said old lady Lord. "I run foul of it when I was huntin' for them turnovers!"

"Turnovers!" cried Kate Jones. "Ma, you've forgotten your turnovers!"

"No, I ain't," replied her mother, in a complacent way. "I've been a-savin' them to top off on. They ain't intended for you young ones, neither; I made them turnovers for us old folks. A sort of special extry *des*ert," she ended, smiling around at the expectant faces.

"I took a terrible lot of pains with 'em," she added; "they'll melt in your mouth, they're so tender."

Rosalie, Louie, and I looked at one another, and felt embarrassed; and I shouldn't wonder if old lady Lord felt somewhat the same way, but she concealed her feelings pretty well, and pretended to be enjoying the joke as much as ever while she told about it. Mrs. Jones did not seem amused. "Do you mean to say," she said, looking severely at me, "that you had your mind fastened on them turnovers before the very apples was picked off'n the trees?"

"Yes,'m," I answered in a very, very faint voice.

She continued to gaze sternly at me. "Well," she said, at length, "I wish I'd 'a' knowed it—that's all."

"I don't wonder they can't eat anything," somebody said.

Mrs. Baker and Cousin Sally looked ashamed. "I'm mortified to death," said Cousin Sally. "I

can't think what got into Louie," said Mrs. Baker; "she never did such a thing before."

"Never mind," said somebody else; "they've had a good set-down for once in their lives. I don't believe they'll ever have such a feast again."

"To think," said a disappointed one, "of the pains that was put into them delicious things, just for three little pigs to gobble up."

I was burning from head to foot, and Louie looked as I felt. Rosalie also was uncomfortable, but she did not seem so overwhelmed with shame. "That lady," who, I am sure, had taken a fancy to me (though why she did I don't understand, for certainly she had not seen me under very favorable circumstances), whispered in my ear that I mustn't lay it to heart. And she added, that she had brought the honey-comb, but thought she wouldn't put it on the table; it was in her buggy, and she would tuck it into Cousin Sally's before we went home.

But even this did not sweeten my disgrace. Life had grown dark to me; I felt that I was one of the meanest sinners in the world. It was a relief when Jo Paine, strumming his banjo, drew attention from us to himself.

Now this part of the picnic was so entertaining that, try as hard as I might, I could not even be-

gin to give you the least idea of it. For the time being I forgot my shame and self-consciousness, and enjoyed the music, laughing and clapping with everybody else. The Paine boys had good voices and a rollicking way with them, and the tunes that they sang were lively. Everybody clapped everything, and they cried: "Splendid, boys!" "Give us another!" "Keep right on!" "That's the best yet!" and so forth and so on, in that complimentary and encouraging way. The Paine boys grew gayer and gayer, and the banjo —I don't know how to express that; "tinkle" is too tame and "rattle" is too romping. But it was so full of frolic that before long most of the young people were dancing on the grass. As to the doubling-uppers, which came last of all, those were so comical that some of the hearers did have to hold their sides, they laughed so hard, and old lady Lord wiped merry tears from her eyes. I cannot recollect a word of them; but it makes me laugh to myself, even now, to remember how I laughed then.

Of course, after a while (it was a long while, though) we went to work raspberrying. There were baskets and baskets and pails and pails full already, set away in shady places, but there were also baskets and baskets and pails and pails yet

to be filled. I could not find any bushes as heavily laden as I had expected, nor was the ground red anywhere, but the berries were indeed very thick, large, and luscious.

Rosalie and I did not pick many. We were tired, I suppose. But we made a trial, and got our hands well scratched with the briars. After Cousin Sally and Kitty had taken about a dozen thorns out of our flesh, they became impatient. "I believe I shall fly!" said Cousin Sally. "Do go and sit down somewhere, and stay there." So, seeing that old lady Lord had quit work, we went to her.

"You poor dears!" she exclaimed, when she saw our scratched hands. "You look as if you'd been to the wars. You're havin' a hard time."

"Oh, no, 'm," I returned; "we're having a splendid time. You don't mind getting scratched at a raspberrying."

"Then you're willin' to bleed in a good cause?" she said, smiling.

"I don't mind bleeding," said Rosalie. "I had a kitten once; she made me bleed every day."

Old lady Lord laughed outright. "Kittens and raspberries," she said, "I don't know which is the scratchiest. My little granddaughter has a kitten, a pretty, white kitten."

"Lots of folks have them," said Rosalie. "The man-that-gave-us-a-lift's little girl has one. She has a wax doll, too, and she is going to have a blue silk parasol. I wish I had a wax doll and a parasol."

"Who is that?" asked old lady Lord, looking interested.

"Her name is Ruby Pearl," I answered, saying the precious name slowly and with relish. "Her father gave us a ride this morning. He came from Windham. He had butter and eggs to sell. He was going to buy Ruby Pearl a blue silk parasol."

"You don't say!" cried old lady Lord. "Did you ride with Freeman? That was my son Freeman. Ruby Pearl is my little granddaughter. I want to know if you rode with Freeman! Well, well!"

Into the midst of our conversation there came a deep bark, and lo—Rover! He bounded out of the woods, straight up to Rosalie.

"Why, Rover! Hello! — Rover!" she cried, springing to meet him. And then she called: "Mother! Kitty! here's Rover! Rover has come to the raspberrying!"

Rover seemed overjoyed. All his dignity had disappeared. He licked Rosalie's face; and

when Prince came frisking to him, he lapped Prince's face also; and he gave short, happy barks.

Cousin Sally and Kitty left their work hastily.

"Your grandmother sent him!" exclaimed Cousin Sally. "She thinks that you are lost! She sent him to find you! She must be worried to death! We must go home at once!"

"Good Rover! Good dog!" said Kitty, patting him.

"Well, that's a dog worth havin'," said old lady Lord.

Rosalie caressed him. "Poor fellow," she said; "did he get his poor back all hurted in the bushes, Rover? Good doggie! Dear Rover!" And she and he and Prince had a loving time, kissing each other repeatedly. Cousin Sally hurried away to get the team, and Kitty collected our baskets.

But we were not the only ones to go home then, for all at once something happened that broke up the raspberrying. Cousin Sally was just leading Charlie from his browsing-place, when a clap of thunder startled us, and we saw with consternation that dark clouds were overspreading the sky. Immediately there was a scene of hurry and confusion: people came running from

all directions; teams were swiftly unhitched and harnessed up; baskets and pails were loaded on; children were called, commanded, and scolded; nervous horses were reasoned with and soothed; mistakes were made; berries were spilled, yet, in the main, everybody was gay and good-humored. Still, it all took time, and before we were ready to go, big drops were splashing down.

The good-bys were hasty but hearty. "Haven't we had a good time?" someone would call. Then somebody else would answer: "Tip-top! Tip-top!" And so we went off whirling.

CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH LIGHTNING GETS INTO DICK

ROSALIE and I were stowed in behind with the baskets, because, after quick consultation with Kitty, Cousin Sally decided to call at the Corn-shop for Molly.

"We shall be wringing wet anyway," she said; "a few drops more or less won't make much difference. And Molly might as well get wet in coming home, where she can change her clothes, and help me with the raspberries, as in going over to Luce Pride's, where, likely as not, she would sit with damp skirts all the evening, wasting time.

"The boys," she added, "will have to walk."

We headed the procession; and oh, what a procession it was! For, as Rosalie and I sat curled up in our close quarters, holding on tight to keep from being jounced out, we could look back and see team after team—a regular cavalcade

—tearing along in our wake. The wood road was gloomily dark, but every few moments a lightning-flash would illume some jolly, laughing phiz, or grim, determined countenance. We caught glimpses of young men with girls' handkerchiefs tied around their necks, of girls with young men's coats on, of sober children sandwiched in with grown folk; and we heard, between the thunder-claps, an unbroken beat of hoofs and whirr of wheels. It made me think of a piece of poetry in the "Standard Speaker":

"I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;"

though, to be sure, there were more than three of us, and galloping is nothing to the way we went —we fairly spun.

Through the woods we rushed, out into the main road, which, being wider, was not so dark as the other, although it looked dismal enough between its sombre walls of pine and spruce. Here the procession divided, part chasing us toward Pride's Corner, the rest racing off Duck-Pond way.

Down by the Corn-shop everything looked dreary. The river was enough to make one shudder, it was so wild and black. And all the trees drooped weepingly. We drove up to the door, and

Kitty went in, coming out again in a few minutes with Molly and Dick. Dick helped the girls into the buggy, and he was very pleasant with them and Cousin Sally, but he cast indignant, reproachful glances at Rosalie and me. When Cousin Sally said, "I'm sorry that you boys must walk through this rain and mud, but I don't see how we can help it," he replied, crossly, that it was a good deal to ask of a feller, but he supposed "those two young ones must be pompered." Then he turned the team for us, and away we dashed again.

Rover and Prince ran beside us; that is, Rover did, but Prince kept getting left and having to make up for it. He looked weary and woe-begone, but Rover bounded along easily.

The rain did not hurt the raspberries, they were so tightly covered, but it almost washed Rosalie and me out of our sockets. We held on, however, and now and then smiled at each other (rather feebly), to show that we were not afraid. On the bridge a vivid flash made Charlie rear, and we nearly pitched headforemost. When Cousin Sally had coaxed him back to his quadruped condition and everything was going on as before, Kitty half turned, and spoke down to us: "Are you there all right?"

"Gracious!" cried Cousin Sally's voice, from 'way around in front; "I never thought of them! They might have been killed!" And then she called angrily to us: "Why didn't you scream?"

So when Charlie reared again we screamed. The next few minutes are utterly indescribable. When we had all recovered from them, Cousin Sally called, more angrily than before: "Don't you scream again! I've enough to contend with, without that!"

Aunt Eunice was standing at the door when we whizzed through the yard and into the barn; the next instant she was in the barn with us. She did not stop to go by way of the shed, but came straight through the rain. She was almost crying with anxiety; her voice was trembly; her hands shook as she lifted Rosalie and me out of the buggy; and she hugged and kissed Rosalie in a way that struck me with wonder, it was so different from her ordinary way.

After we were in the house, dryly clothed, sitting around the kitchen stove, toasting our toes, and sipping hot ginger-tea, we heard Aunt Eunice's story.

She did not miss Rosalie and me until dinner-time, when we did not answer her call. She waited awhile, and then hunted for us. Then

she sent Rover into the woods across the road, but she was not really alarmed till he came back without us. He began to act strangely, smelling the ground, wagging his tail, looking up into her face, and barking, as if he were trying to say something; so she said: "Go and find them, Rover." That was at about three o'clock, and since then she had been hunting the place over and worrying.

Then it was our turn, and we had, as you know, a good deal to tell. Supper was ready, the tea-kettle was singing, the rain beat unceasingly against the windows, and we all talked on. Aunt Eunice lighted a lamp, and still we talked. But suddenly Prince started up, barking, and we knew that the boys had come.

He made such an unusual fuss about it, even for him, that all of us ran to the window to see what the matter was; and then we did not wonder, for—such a sight! Up the grassy border of the drive-way Dick was coming—*turning handsprings*.

At the steps he paused, laboriously mounted them on his hands, turned a somersault into the kitchen, and sank, exhausted, wet, and muddy, into a chair.

"I didn't know—as I should—hold out—to get here," he panted, with a reproachful look at

Rosalie and me; "my legs—gave out—'way down—by Sam Cobb's biscuit."

All through supper Dick behaved ridiculously; and not Dick alone, but Bert and Phil as well. They acted like little boys. No; worse, far worse than that. Dick was the worst of the three. I am not going to describe his jokes and antics, because, although they made us merry at the time, they would not sound funny on paper, they were so silly. When at length Cousin Sally told him of it—"Oh, Dick," she said, "you are so silly! You are always frivolous, but to-night you are more absurd than ever"—he replied, that he realized it, but that he couldn't seem to help it—lightning got into him on the way home. He always suffered in a thunder-storm, he said, but this time he was out in it so long (and here he gave one of those reproachful looks at Rosalie and me) that more lightning than usual got into him; he expected it would be popping off all night.

What struck me even more than Dick's folly, was Philip's foolishness, because hitherto Philip had been so unvaryingly well-behaved. But now, when Rosalie climbed up in his lap and coaxed him a little, he put his thumb in his mouth, fixed his eyes on the ceiling, and recited after her:

"'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?'"

Try it yourself, and imagine how funny it looked.

After supper, Cousin Sally said:

"Now, I have those raspberries to fix, and I can't spare the time to milk; somebody else will have to do it. You had better, Molly; Bert will have his hands full, taking care of Charlie and the buggy. After I get the berries cooked enough I want you to help fill the jars, but you'll have time to milk." Then she went out of the room.

"I don't want to milk," said Molly; "I want to press my skirt, so that it will be fit to wear to-morrow. You do it, Kitty, will you? You can, if you want to; you know how. Come, I'll lend you my ear-rings if you will."

For a moment Kitty did not speak; then she said: "I don't want to milk; I'm too tired; I've worked awful hard all day. Phil, why can't you? I'll tell you how. You ought to learn, anyway; it's always handy to know how to do things."

Philip laughed. "I think I'd just as lief not

know how to milk," he replied, in his moderate way. "Besides, I have on my good clothes; you don't want to work when you are dressed up, you know."

"How would it hurt your clothes? The idea!" said Kitty, scornfully.

"Sure enough," said Dick. "As if any clothes were too good to milk dear Fannie in!"

"Well," said Philip, "I have a bone in my leg, and I'm afraid that dear Fannie might break it."

"Then you, Dick?" Kitty begged.

"All right," said Dick, airily. "I have my best clothes on, too, but I'd love to oblige you, Kitty.

"I don't know the first thing about it," he went on, "but I'm anxious to learn, and if you'll all come out and tell me how, I'll see what I can do." And he added, with one of those heart-rending, resentful looks at Rosalie and me: "All *my* bones are broken *now* — walking 'way up from the Corn-shop to-night."

So we gleefully trooped to the barn to teach Dick how to milk. (Of course Molly stopped to put her irons on.)

Now he did know how, perfectly well, for he was a farmer's son, and had been brought up to

milk cows, but he professed the densest ignorance. We stood, sat, and scooched around. The lantern lit our faces, making them look white and bright amid the shadows.

"Which part of her do you milk?" he asked, guilelessly.

"I always wring it out of her horns," said Bert.

Dick pretended to twist Fannie's horns, gravely holding the pail up, but not a drop came. Both he and Fannie looked surprised.

"I think I've heard that you pump the tail," suggested Philip.

Dick went around to the tail, and worked it up and down. Fannie objected, trying to shove him away.

"Oh, come; it's too bad," Molly protested.

"That isn't the right way at all," said Kitty. "The right way is to squeeze the cow."

Dick began to hug Fannie. He threw his arms around her neck. "Fannie, darling," he said, in a wheedling tone, "give Dicky-bird some milk."

Fannie did not know what to make of this foolery. "Moo!" she said, angrily, wrenching her head away.

Molly was uneasy. "Don't, Dick," she said.

"Do milk properly, and get through. I'm afraid we shall spoil her."

So Dick did milk properly, though every once in a while he would turn his head and simper and smirk at us; but Fannie held her grudge, and no sooner was the last drop in the pail than she deliberately lifted her foot and kicked pail and Dick to the floor.

He was drenched. But even this did not subdue him; he only turned the empty pail upside down, seated himself, pulled a huge red bandanna handkerchief from his pocket, and began to cry.

We tried to comfort him.

"I'll give you my pie every day for a week, Dick," said Kitty.

"So will I," said Rosalie.

"I will, too," said I.

"I'll never forget how you look, Dick," said Molly, laughing.

"You're the prettiest thing this side of China, Dick," said Bert. "If I looked as pretty as that I should want to go right down through, and see if they had anything there to beat me."

"I never thought you a milksop, Dick," said Philip, "but at present you have every appearance of being one."

Dick sobbed on, and dolefully shook his head.

"It—it will take—more than pie—and praises—to—to mend my bones—and—and improve my appearance," he said, brokenly.

"What can we do for you?" asked Molly.

"If you—would only—lend me—your—your ear-rings—" he said, between his sobs.

Molly looked out of the corner of her eye at Kitty, and innocently asked: "Why, how could you wear ear-rings?"

"Oh," he answered, also looking at Kitty out of the corner of his eye, "I'd—I'd—find a way—to wear them."

Kitty did not look cornerwise; she faced them squarely. She was blushing, but her eyes blazed.

"You mean old things!" she burst forth. "You've known about it all the time! Of course I ought not to have taken them; but all the same, I despise people who twit!"

Molly looked a little ashamed. Dick quivered with grief. Then Philip spoke up, like a good peacemaker:

"Another kind of wrings would be more becoming to you, Dick," he said. "I'll see what I can do for you, if you like."

"I don't want your—jewelry—dear boy," said Dick; "there's—there's only—one thing—that would do me any good."

"Name it," said Philip.

"If you'd—only—take me—up in your lap—and—and say—Peter—Piper—picked a—peck o'—boo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!"

"All right," said Philip, when he could make himself heard through our laughter, "I will, when you get on something dry."

Dick began to sob louder. "All—all—*all* my clothes—boo-hoo—are in—in soak! Boo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!" he cried, in anguish.

Oh, dear, how we did laugh! Fannie mooed, Charlie gave a shrill neigh, and Prince barked excitedly; and of course this did not lessen the fun. Into the midst of it came Cousin Sally.

"Why, what's this?" she said, sharply. "What does this mean?"

There was a sudden hush. Then Molly spoke, her voice unsteady with mirth and dread:

"Why, you see, mother, Dick was milking——"

"Oh!" said Cousin Sally. "Dick was milking, was he?"

"I was treating her with the greatest respect that ever was," said Dick, in an injured tone. "She never said a word till I got through, and then she up and let me have it, just out of spite."

"A likely story," said Cousin Sally. "Fannie is not spiteful; she is the gentlest creature in the world. You needn't tell me, Dick Jones; I know you provoked her."

"The fact is, Mrs. Reed," said Dick, earnestly, flaunting his red bandanna, "that cow has always been jealous of me, I'm so good-looking."

Cousin Sally gazed at him. "Her heart must be at peace now," she said; and then she, too, was seized with a fit of laughter.

I was astounded. That serene Aunt Eunice could worry and be overcome by her feelings, that Rover could depart from dignity, that Philip could be foolish—these facts had strongly impressed me; but that fretty Cousin Sally could stand and laugh, in the face of such waste of milk, was the most amazing fact of all. But consistency is a jewel that isn't set in everybody's birth-month ring. And anyway, you can't expect a person's ways to be like a paper doll's dresses—all cut to fit the same attitude. Or perhaps I should say, you can't expect people to be like paper dolls—each one fixed "just so" for life: they will vary now and then; and that, you know, a paper doll never does.

CHAPTER XXII

IN WHICH I EXIT

THAT night I had uncomfortable dreams. I dreamed, for one thing, that old lady Lord and I were up a tree, which Dick was shaking with all his might, while Fannie stood at the foot of it, lashing her tail and mooing terribly. So it isn't to be wondered at that I felt dull the next day. I coughed a good deal, and did not want any breakfast.

Rosalie was not very bright, either; she was tired and out of humor. Cousin Sally was tired and out of humor, too. Even Kitty was less sunny than usual. Aunt Eunice herself was somewhat under the weather.

For the weather certainly was trying. It was hot, damp, muggy, and sticky. The flowers hung their heads, the birds had nothing whatever to say, the hens were moody. Only the insects

seemed to think all things ordered for the best, and they made enough noise about it to give all the rest of the universe a headache.

"Such a time as I've had scrubbing up that milk," Cousin Sally grumbled. "Bert didn't half do it. And he didn't hurt himself over the buggy. And the dresses that those children wore yesterday are a sight to behold. And the currants are just ripe enough for jelly, but this is no kind of day for jelly-making. And there's a mess of peas that must be picked, whether or no. And Dick's clothes will have to be washed out at once. And there's cooking to be done if old lady Lord is coming to-morrow; I want her to find as good a table as Luce Pride sets. And, to crown all, Emma Ellen is coming down this afternoon, to stay over night."

"Emma Ellen coming!" exclaimed Kitty. "Oh, goody!"

"I like Emma Ellen," Cousin Sally responded, "but you know well enough that when Emma Ellen comes you young folks go wild. Dick and Emma Ellen together are more than I care to look forward to, on such a day as this."

"Don't look forward to it, then," said Aunt Eunice. "'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Make Bert do the buggy over. You

should have left the milk for him and Dick to clean up; it isn't so hard for them as for you. Perhaps to-morrow will be a good jelly day. I'll tend to Dick's clothes and the dresses, while you pick the peas. Mehitable Lord doesn't go to see her friends for what she can get to eat, and if we didn't have anything but bread and milk nobody else would ever be the wiser. And as for Emma Ellen, you know that you enjoy her visits as much as the young folks do."

"I'm going to stay home and help," said Kitty.

"Indeed, you are not," her mother returned. "You are going to school, miss. One day dismissed, another absent—how much schooling do you think you will get?"

"Do let me stay," Kitty coaxed.

"No," was her mother's firm answer; "you'll go to school."

"What time is Emma Ellen coming?" asked Kitty.

"I told her to be sure to come early," said Cousin Sally.

After Kitty went to school, Rosalie and I sat around moping, not knowing what to do for amusement. Cousin Sally noticed our listlessness.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "Can't you find anything to play?"

"Everything is played out," I answered, with a cough.

"We're tired of everything," Rosalie said, peevishly.

Cousin Sally looked attentively at us.

"You are what is played out; and I don't wonder," she said. "You must keep quiet to-day. Why don't you make some leaf dolls? I used to make them when I was a little girl. You can't hurt yourselves doing that, and it will occupy you."

"How did you make them?" we asked.

"I can't stop to make one for you, but I'll tell you how," she said. "You take a little piece of stem, about so long, for a body, and tie a little piece across it for arms. Then you make a hole in the middle of a leaf, and slip it up over the stem, for a skirt, puckering it down—so—with your fingers. Then you slip another down over the head and arms, for a waist; and you hold them together, while you tie a sash of grass around. Then you put on a flower-cap, and there you have your doll."

We went down to the roadside to get some suitable stems and leaves. Then we went up to the barn chamber to make the dolls.

It was easy and interesting, and we made a

good many, with different kinds of leaves for dresses, different kinds of grass for sashes, and different flowers or parts of flowers for caps. While I was at work on my seventeenth, I said, "Rosalie, these are new beings."

"What's beings?" she asked.

"Why," I hesitated, "beings are—beings. You are a being, and I am. And Rover and Prince are; and so are Fannie and Charlie. And there are other kinds of beings—Creatures and Things."

"No, siree!" cried Rosalie.

"Yes, siree," I insisted.

"No, siree," she said again. "Fannie is a cow, and Rover and Prince are dogs, and Charlie is a horse, and I am a girl, and these are just dolls. So there, now!"

"They are beings, too," I repeated, as obstinate as she was.

"They are not!" she cried, and threw one at me.

"I was going to make up something about them to play," I returned in an offended tone.

"I don't care," said Rosalie; and then she asked: "What were you going to make up?"

"Let's play Fairy Godmother, and give a great feast to the new beings."

"All right," she responded; "so we will. But, Lucy, what can we have for the feast? There isn't anything but raspberries, unless grandma will give us some cookies."

"Oh, yes," I replied; "there are blueberries, and bunchberries over in the woods, and this cough candy." And I took from my pocket a piece of horehound candy, which Cousin Sally had given me.

"We can have lots of dishes," I continued, "and each dish can have a quality."

"What's that?" she asked.

"It means," I answered, hesitating, "that when a new being chooses some dish to eat of she will have a fairy gift bestowed upon her. If she eats of one she will be beautiful, if she eats of another she will be the best dancer in the world, if she eats of another she will be rich, and so on. In fairy stories it is always the fairy godmothers who have the feast given to them, but it's just as well to do things different once in a while. I don't like to do the same things that everybody else does."

We started on a foraging expedition. When we returned we laid a long board tablewise on two small blocks of wood, and spread our feast upon it. We had the little dishes, and also used leaves

for plates. We had platters of green apples, dishes of blueberries, huckleberries, raspberries, bunchberries, half-ripe choke-cherries, hollyhock cheeses, flag-root, and horehound candy, pitchers of raspberry sirup, and piles of checkerberry leaves, sorrel leaves, and molasses cookies.

We arranged the leaf dolls at the sides of the table, and took our places, with Dolladine and Zareffa, at the head and foot.

Each of the dishes had its quality ; there were beauty, heroism, grace, goodness, wisdom, riches, skill, etc. Each of the dolls was offered a choice of viands, and whatever she chose we ate for her.

This took a good while, for although there was but little of each kind of food, we were very ceremonious and made much conversation—as became fairy godmothers.

After the feast was over and all the new beings were endowed with qualities, we took them to a corner of the orchard, and left them there to found a nation. Then we went into the house, because it was dinner-time ; but we did not want anything to eat.

At about half-past one, who should put in an appearance but Kitty, looking a little doubtful as to her probable reception, but also with an air of

being ready for any emergency. "Has Emma Ellen come yet?" she asked, as she walked into the kitchen.

"You've been dismissed!" cried her mother.

"No, I haven't—not exactly," Kitty replied.

"Not exactly?" said her mother.

"No," said Kitty. "I knew that Miss Mayberry wouldn't let me off, because she has once before this week, so I wrote a note and put it on her desk at noon. I wrote that I was wanted at home, and couldn't stop to tell why; and then I skipped."

"You'll worry me to death," said her mother. "And you didn't tell the truth, for you are not wanted at home."

"Yes, I am," Kitty returned, cheerfully; "you see if you don't want me for something or other before the afternoon is out. And the children want me; don't you, children?"

Emma Ellen did not come, after all; but Cousin Sally did want Kitty before the afternoon was over, as you will soon see.

Before the afternoon was over I began to feel ill. Cousin Sally felt of my head and hands, and looked worried. "She is going to be sick, I know," she said.

"We must keep her quiet, and give her a

dose of nitre when she goes to bed," said Aunt Eunice, calmly.

"Where do you feel worst, Lucy?" asked Cousin Sally, kneeling down beside me.

I put my hand on my throat, then on my head, and then I put it on my stomach. "There's an awful funny feeling here," I said, hoarsely; "I guess this is the worst, and it's growing worser."

"That's strange," said Cousin Sally. "She didn't eat any breakfast or dinner. It can't be those turnovers; they were rich, to be sure, but they would have hurt her before this if they had been going to hurt her at all. Besides, they didn't hurt Rosalie. Have you eaten anything, Lucy?"

"Only the Fairy Godmothers' Feast," I answered.

"The what?" said Cousin Sally, looking blankly at me.

"The feast that we gave to the new beings," I explained. But she still looked blank.

"We made a feast for the leaf dolls," said Rosalie. "We had it up in the barn chamber. We didn't eat everything, though."

"What did you eat?" her mother asked, anxiously.

Rosalie told off on her fingers:

"Blueberries, and huckleberries, and raspberries, and bunchberries, and choke-cherries, and cheeses, and cough candy, and cookies, and raspberry sirup, and we chewed a few sorrel leaves and checkerberry leaves, and just bit some flagroot and green apples."

Cousin Sally sat down on the floor in horror and dismay. "You'll be sick next!" she cried. "Mother, I shall carry Lucy home to-night; two sick ones are more than I can undertake. I will not be responsible for her any longer."

"I don't know but that I would," said Aunt Eunice.

They gave me some medicine that helped the funny feeling; Aunt Eunice dressed me and packed my things; Cousin Sally dressed herself and harnessed Charlie. "I'm glad that you are here, Kitty," she said; "you can look out for Lucy, and I sha'n't have to come home alone."

"I'm glad," I said to Rosalie, "that I'm going to see mother and grandma and grandpa and Bobby, but I wish I could see Philip. He was going to finish a story. And I want to see him, even without the story."

It was so late when we were ready, that instead of waiting for supper, Cousin Sally took something with her to eat on the way. I said good-by to

Rover and Prince as well as to Aunt Eunice and Rosalie, and we started. I leaned against Kitty and idly gazed as we sped along. It seemed queer to keep meeting the things that I had kept leaving behind when I rode out with Mr. Crowe. I silently bade farewell to them all—to the woods, the village, the school-house, the beautiful river with its green and blue reflections. The sun was sinking, and soon it disappeared, leaving the wide west glorious. The upper air was full of swallows; to me they looked like arrows darting across the sky. I have never forgotten it—that great wide sunset sky, full of darting arrows.

Kitty chattered a good deal, but Cousin Sally was quiet. Once or twice she felt of my forehead and said: "How do you feel now, Lucy?"

"Tired and sleepy," I answered. "How long will it take to get there?"

"Not long," she returned.

By the time we reached Deering bridge it was dusk, and the gas-lights were starting up, one by one, in the city. There were lights in windows here and there, also. The streets looked strange in the semi-darkness, as if we were riding into a place that I knew nothing about. "It must seem like this when you travel," I thought, "or when you go on adventures to far kingdoms."

I EXIT

We drove up Green Street and through Cumberland and Chestnut. Leaning back, I looked straight up, so that I could see nothing but the stirring tree-tops and the stars peeping through. I made believe that I was in a winged car, floating along up there. It seemed so real that once or twice I clutched Cousin Sally and Kitty, to keep from being brushed off by the boughs. This made Cousin Sally nervous; she thought that it was one of my symptoms, and said she should be "glad and thankful" to get me home.

Then, pretty soon, we came to Middle Street. Here I had other things to observe. I sat erect and observed them.

There was light stealing through the blinds of the Tates' front parlor, and the piano was going; Celia, Henrietta, and Julie must be entertaining their beaux. Both of Aunt Priscilla's blinds were partly open; I knew that she and Liddy Ellen were sitting there, watching to see what went on in the neighborhood. I could hear the boisterous Bibber boys, playing in their yard; their mother let them stay out (so I had heard Aunt Priscilla and Liddy Ellen declare) disgracefully late. Cap'n Weeks sat at a table near his open window, nodding over his newspaper, and big, dark, flitting things, which I knew must be moths, were hover-

ing around the lamp-chimney and his bald head. Something white was glimmering on the steps of the Halladay house; it must be Anita Berry's dress. How pleased she would be to see Kitty—for of course Kitty would run over there and have a chat.

How natural everything looked!—just as it always used to!—the trees, the lamp-post, the houses, our wood-shed with its open door, and the cheerful light, far in beyond the entry, where I should find them all. In another minute I had found them, and was in my mother's arms.

"Oh, mother! mother!" I cried; "I've had such a good time! But, oh, I'm so glad to get home!"

THE END

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